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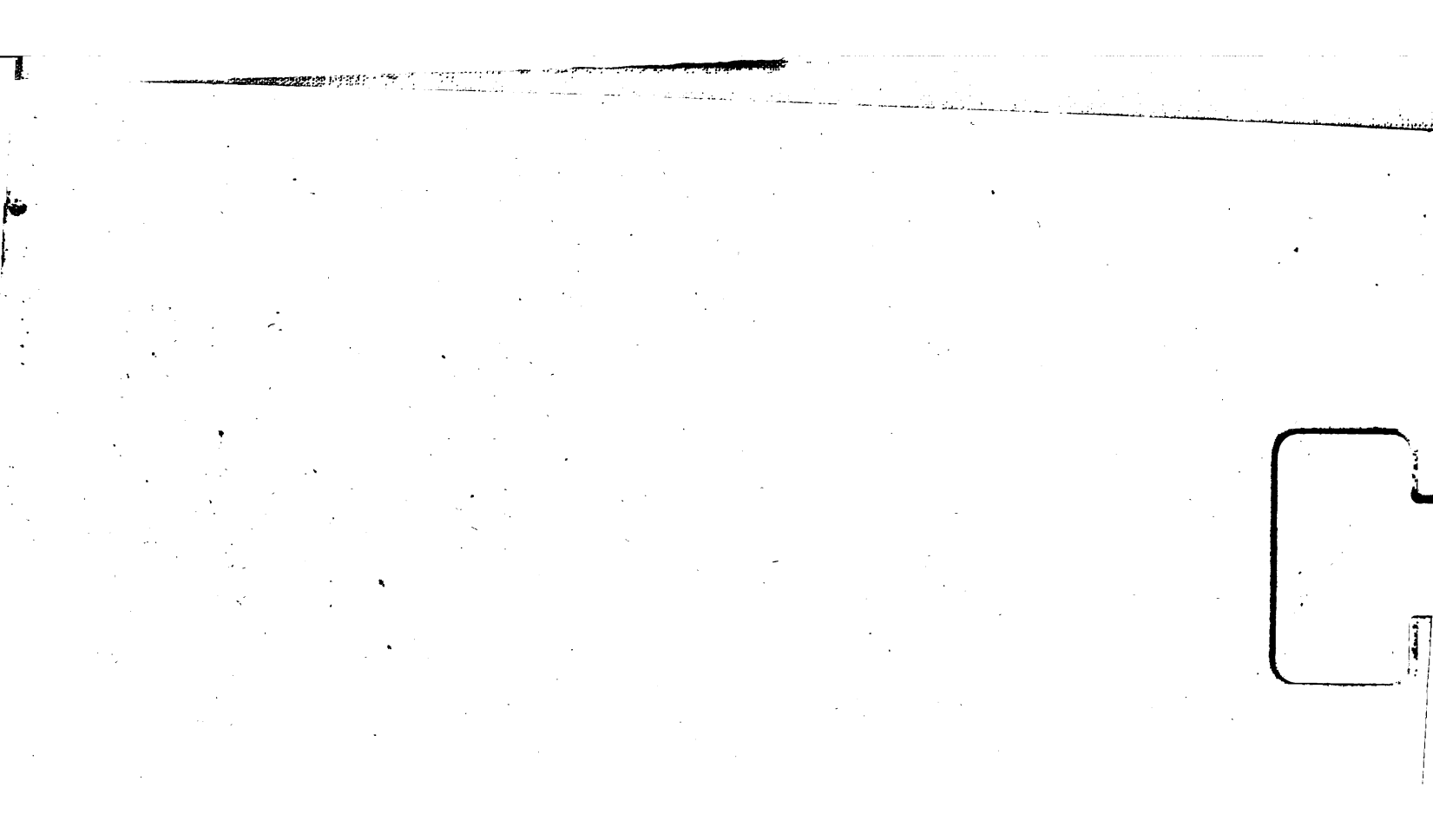

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Brit. Mus. Cott. MS. Domitian A. II. fol. 21.

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THE

Chronicle of Battel Abbey,

FROM 1066 TO 1176.

NOW FIRST TRANSLATED,

WITH

NOTES, AND AN ABSTRACT OF THE SUBSEQUENT HISTORY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT;

BY

MARK ANTONY LOWER, M.A.,

MEMBER OF THE SOCIETIES OF ANTIQUARIES OF NORMANDY AND OF AMERICA, AND OF THE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES OF CAEN.

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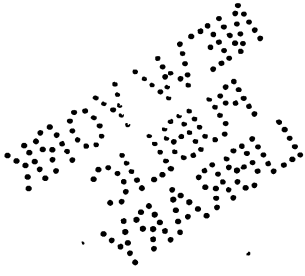

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TO

CHARLOTTE, LADY WEBSTER,

OF

Battel Abbey,

THIS VOLUME,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE EARLY HISTORY

OF ONE OF THE MOST RENOWNED OF THE

ENGLISH MONASTERIES,

AND OF ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING OF OUR

NATIONAL MONUMENTS,

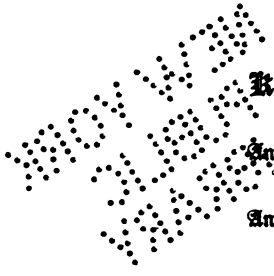
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

BY HER LADYSHIP'S

OBLIGED AND OBEDIENT SERVANT,

THE TRANSLATOR.

JAN. 1, 1851.



King William bithought hym alsoe of that
Folke that was forlorne
And slayn also thoruz hym
In the bataile biforne.
And ther as the bataile was
An Abbey he lete rere
Of Seint Martin for the soules
That there slayn were
And the monkes wel ynoug
Fetled without fayle
That is called in Englonde
Abbey of Bataile.

Robert of Gloucester.

Prima nocte post ingressum Willielmi in terram Angliæ, dum jaceret in papilione, venit ad eum vox, dicens; Willielme, Willielme, esto bonus homo, quia in regni corona prævalebis, et rex Angliæ eris, et cum hostem deviceris, fac construi Ecclesiam in eodem loco, in nomine meo, tot centenorum pedum in longitudine quot annorum numero semen sanguinis tui regni Angliae gubernaculum possidebit et in Anglia regnabit.

Knyghton.

Dicitur, a Bello, Bellum, LOCUS HIC, QUIA BELLO
ANGLIGENAE VICTI, SUNT HIC IN MORTE RELICTI;
MARTYRIS IN FESTO CHRISTI CECIDERE CALISTI;
SEXAGENUS ERAT SEXTUS MILLESIMUS ANNUS,
CUM PERIERUNT ANGLI, STELLA MONSTRANTE COMETA.

From a Tablet formerly hung up in the Abbey.

PREFACE.

THE light which is cast upon the earlier periods of English History by the publication of monkish chronicles is acknowledged by every student of our annals who, unwilling to take upon trust the statements of popular historiographers, goes to original sources of information, and seeks after Truth among the mists and shadows of Antiquity. Until a comparatively recent period most readers were content to accept the history of their fatherland through the brilliant, but often prejudice-distorted, medium of writers whose principal characteristic was an aptitude for excellent composition, with very little for the patient research and laborious investigation so essential to a right appreciation of the motives which influenced the actors in the great drama of English history. Of late, however, there has arisen a disposition to examine original authorities, either in the inelegant Latinity of medieval writers, or by means of translations. The latter have been made as well for the use of those whose reading has been limited to the classical authors, and to whom the early chroniclers speak

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quantity of matter it is difficult to conjecture—though I am inclined, from internal evidence, to believe that it is not very considerable. Of the identity of the author nothing certain can be inferred, beyond the bare fact of his having been a monk of Battel. A few passages would almost incline one to believe that Abbot Odo, who was living at the date of the last events narrated in the work, and who is known to have been a literary character of some eminence, was the writer of at least some portions of the volume.

The following are the principal subjects contained in the Chronicle: the Norman Invasion—the Conqueror's Vow to found a monastery on the field of battle—the fulfilment of that Vow—the peculiar privileges of the Abbey, and its exemption from episcopal and civil jurisdiction, constituting it a kind of *imperium in imperio*—the origin of the town of Battel—royal and other benefactions to the Abbey—feudal customs—a series of quarrels and suits between the bishops of Chichester and the abbots, concerning jurisdiction—acts and characters of the successive abbots—suits and negociations respecting the Abbey's possessions; interwoven with many facts and incidents of our national history—miracles—pious reflections—anecdotes of the Norman kings and other distinguished personages—improvements in the abbatial buildings—and various other matters, all more or less illustrative of our early annals, and of the state of society during the period which it embraces.

My object in undertaking this translation was to illustrate local history. I am not, therefore, called upon either to attack or to defend the religious sentiments incidentally introduced

by the Chronicler into various parts of his work; yet a remark or two on the Monastic system may not be deemed impertinent in this place.

While it is readily admitted that monachism originated in mistaken views of the spirit and intention of Christianity, the candid inquirer will not deny that it was overruled by Divine Providence for great and useful purposes. The monks became, in many instances, the pioneers of civilization, the patrons of art, and the promoters of agriculture. Throughout the middle ages they were the conservators of literature and science; and it is difficult to conceive what would have become, not only of the literary monuments of antiquity, but of the very spirit of learning and historic record itself, had not the monasteries afforded their shelter to the former, and their fostering care to the latter. In the absence of this, or some analogous system, the history of Europe, during more than the thousand years characterised, even now, as the Dark Ages, would have been immeasurably darker still.

It is capable of proof, too, that the monastic orders had the effect of promoting the cause of civil liberty. Just as a feudal baronage, though comprising within itself the elements of tyranny, interposed itself between the people and monarchal despotism, so these, by the constant warfare they carried on with a proud hierarchy, modified its bearing upon the masses of the community.

Until the morals of the monks became flagrantly corrupt, the convents were highly and deservedly popular. Wherever a brotherhood settled down, the adjacent lands were brought into cultivation, labour was plentiful, hospitality prevailed,

and peace and good order resulted. A well-endowed and regularly-conducted Abbey was at once the school, the hospital, the dispensary, and the workhouse of a large surrounding district.

In a retrospect of monachism, then, let us mingle our judgment with mercy, nor ungratefully forget how largely we moderns stand indebted to a system which—however erroneous in its institution—however debased in its decline—however deservedly doomed to extinction—assisted in working out for us the personal and moral freedom we now so fully enjoy.

LEWES;
15*th February*, 1851.

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THE

HISTORY OF THE FOUNDATION

OF

Battel Abbey.

HAVING at hand certain records, which are a memorial to posterity concerning the site and establishment of our place, namely, the Abbey of S. Martin of Battel, we have now resolved to write more at large respecting it, recapitulating some facts, and supplying others that have been omitted, in order to hand down, collected into a book, whatever we have been able to learn worthy of the remembrance of aftercoming times; and these things we have gathered, either from verbal statements or from documents written by our predecessors. And inasmuch as the widely-spread possessions of this Abbey—the situation of its lands—its yearly revenues—and its liberties, customs, and dignities, have not heretofore been very clearly exhibited, neither yet various other matters tending to its security or advantage in such suits or negociations as may hereafter arise —although we are utterly insufficient for the undertaking, yet it has seemed to us desirable to apply our scanty abilities to the fuller elucidation of matters from the beginning.

THE PREFACE.

By that providence by which all earthly affairs are arranged, the most pious Duke William, of the illustrious stock of the Normans, and of their famous prince Rollo, a man worthy to be designated the father of his country, and the landmark of his duchy and kingdom,

Origin of the Abbey.

having arisen like a morning star upon the world[1] —(through his admirable diligence, accompanied by God's favour, his own liberality, and the assistance of the nobility of France)— after innumerable storms of calamity, happily asserted his claim to the government left him in right of heirship by his father, and at length effectually reduced it under his power.

In the mean time his kinsman, King Edward, died, and left the kingdom of England to Duke William, whom he constituted his legal heir. But this was seized upon by a certain *perjured slave*[2] called Harold, and the duke having received information of it, relying upon the advice and assistance of his friends, devoted all his energies, either by force or stratagem, to recover his rights. He therefore prepared himself a great fleet; and many counts, nobles, and illustrious men, and many barons who were not his subjects, but belonged to neighbouring provinces, from motives of respect associated themselves in his retinue. The duke, therefore, *William lands at Pevensey:* setting sail with a prodigious army, and attended by the divine favour, arrived safely near the castle called Pevensey.[3]

. . . . . The soldiers leaped joyfully upon English ground at intervals along the shore . . . . . It happened as the duke left his ship, that he fell upon his face, making his nose somewhat bloody upon the beach, and grasping the earth with his outstretched hands. Many of the bystanders feared the consequences of so unlucky a presage, and stood whispering together. But the duke's sewer, William Fitz-Osbert[4]

[1] "In mundi climate prout Lucifer exortus." The good monk appears to have had the passage of Ovid in his mind—

"Admonitorque operum cœlo clarissimus alto
Lucifer ortus erat." *Met.* iv, 664-5.

[2] "*Suo*" in MS. probably for "*seruo.*"

[3] Here a leaf is apparently missing from the MS., and the sense being consequently broken, the exact meaning of the words at the beginning of the next leaf cannot be ascertained.

[4] William, son of Osborne de Crepon, and usually called William Fitz-Osborne. He was one of the duke's chief advisers respecting the invasion. He held the offices of steward of the household and sewer in the Norman court, and was afterwards advanced to the

a man of great merit and much ready wit, being at hand, boldly rallied the failing courage of the waverers with a word. "Cease men," said he, "to interpret this as a misfortune, for by my troth, it is a token of prosperity; for lo! he hath embraced England with both his hands, and sealed it to his posterity with his own blood; and thus by the foreshowing of Divine Providence is he destined effectually to win it!"

Things thus turning out according to his wishes, the duke did not long remain in that place, but went away with his men to a port not far distant called Hastings; and there, having secured an appropriate place, and acting upon a prudent determination, he speedily built a castle of wood.[5] And having burnt the greatest part of the ships (lest any of his followers, relying upon the hope of returning home, should be careless in the design that they had undertaken), the duke—now shortly about to become a king—anxiously hastened to reduce the surrounding country. *and proceeds to Hastings.*

Harold, the usurper of the kingdom, hearing of his arrival, quickly collected his army, resolved upon driving out the duke, or rather upon utterly destroying him and his, and marched forward, with great boldness and expedition, to the place which is now called Battel, where the duke, surrounded by his battalions of cavalry, met him courageously. Having arrived at a hill called Hechelande,[6] situated in the direction of Hastings, while they were helping one another on with their armour, there was brought forth a coat of mail for the duke to put on, and by accident it was handed to him the

earldom of Hereford and the Isle of Wight. The principal duties of the sewer were to serve up dishes for the king's table, and to taste every viand before the monarch ventured to partake of it. This, being a precaution to avoid poisoning, was generally committed to some personage in high favour with the monarch. Fitz-Osborne on one occasion incurred the king's displeasure by serving up a crane which was scarcely half-roasted. William was so highly enraged that he raised his fist for the purpose of striking the favourite, but was prevented by another of his attendants named Eudo, whom he afterwards rewarded with the office of *dapifer*, for his seasonable interference.

[5] Vide *Sussex Archæological Collections*, vol. ii, p. 54.

[6] Or Hetheland. The name is now lost.

wrong side foremost.[7] Those who stood by and saw this cursed it as an unfortunate omen, but the duke's sewer again bade them be of good cheer, and declared that this also was a token of good fortune, namely, that those things which had before kept their ground were about fully to submit themselves to him. The duke, perfectly unmoved, put on the mail with a placid countenance, and uttered these memorable words: "I know, my dearest friends, that if I had any confidence in omens, I ought on no account to go to battle to-day; but, committing myself trustfully to my Creator in every matter, I have given no heed to omens; neither have I ever loved sorcerers. *Wherefore, now, secure of His aid, and in order to strengthen the hands and courage of you, who for my sake are about to engage in this conflict, I make a* Vow, *that upon this place of battle I will found a suitable free Monastery,* for the salvation of you all, and especially of those who fall; and this I will do in honour of God and his saints, to the end that the servants of God may be succoured; that even as I shall be enabled to acquire for myself a propitious asylum, so it may be freely offered to all my followers."[8]

William's vow.

Among those who heard this vow, was a monk of Marmoutier,[9] one William, surnamed Faber, who formerly, while in the service of the duke, had obtained

Request of William Faber.

[7] "Inversa ipsi oblata est." The coat of mail (lorica) alluded to, was the tunic quilted with rings (or with mascles), so many representations of which occur in the Bayeux Tapestry. Its general form was that of a shirt with short sleeves. The word *inversa* may be read either as I have given it, or "inside out." "Among the last incidents of the Tapestry, we find one of the victors stripping a dead warrior of his armour, which he is pulling over his head *inverted*." (Planché, Hist. Brit. Costume.) It is hardly probable, however, that the duke's attendants would have presented his hauberk turned "inside out." The blunder, then, was simply that of attempting to put it on the wrong way, as a person dressing in the dark might don his shirt with the breast to his back. The sewer's interpretation of the omen would thus be pertinent: "As the duke's hauberk turns back upon him," he might have said, "so shall these Englishmen soon turn their backs upon us!"

[8] I am not quite satisfied with this rendering, as the latter portion of the sentence is imperfect in the original.

[9] *Majus Monasterium*, or Marmoutier, is situated near Tours. It is said to have been founded by St. Martin, the great apostol of the Gauls, who is reported to have died th

the name of Faber (or 'the smith') from this circumstance:—As he was one day a-hunting with his companions, they happened to be short of arrows, and thereupon had recourse for more to a neighbouring smith, who proved to be unacquainted with such sort of work. William therefore seized his tools, and presently, with great ingenuity, fabricated an arrow. This man, afterwards changing his profession, betook himself to a religious life at Marmoutier, the fame of which for sanctity was then very great. And when the descent of the duke upon England was everywhere extolled, he, in order to advance the interests of his Church, attached himself to the army. Immediately on hearing the duke's vow, which was exactly suited to his wishes, he proposed that the monastery should be dedicated to the blessed bishop S. Martin.[10] The pious duke favoured his suit, and benignly promised that it should be so.

The duke, then, by his heralds, thrice offered conditions of peace, which were thrice refused by the enemy; and at length, conformably to the prophecy of Merlin "that a Norman people in iron coats should lay low the pride of the English," it was manfully fought with arms.[11]

Nov. 11th, 412. (Vide the succeeding note.) The monastery was burnt by the Normans in the ninth century. At a subsequent period it became one of the conventual glories of France, and as such subsisted until the Revolution of 1789. At present, the antiquarian traveller on his approach to Tours by the Loire has some difficulty in tracing on the left bank of the river the ruins of this once majestic and important structure.

[10] St. Martin, a Pannonian by birth, was the son of a Roman military tribune, and was born about A.D. 316. He was originally a soldier, then a hermit, and finally, bishop of Tours, in France. He died A.D. 400. He is accounted the apostol of the Gauls, and from his original profession is frequently styled the military saint. Hence Faber's predilection for him, and hence the appropriate dedication of Battel Abbey. His feast is the 11th of November, and Martinmas is accounted one of the cross, or intermediate, quarter-days. This festival, like some others in the Romish calendar, was the substitute of a Pagan one, antiently held at the same season in honour of Bacchus; and good Protestants have not been remiss in paying their respects to St. Martin's memory: *Teste* Barnaby Googe:—

"To belly cheare yet once again doth Martin more encline,
Whom all the people worshippeth with rosted geese and wine."

[11] Merlin's words, as recited in Geoffrey of Monmouth, are: "The German dragon (i.e. the Anglo-Saxons) shall hardly get to his holes, because the revenge of his treason

The Battle.

Upon the hill where the Abbey now stands, the English supported their king in a compact body.....But at length, by a preconcerted scheme, the duke feigned a retreat with his army, and Eustace, the valiant count of Boulogne, nimbly following the rear of the English, who were scattered in the pursuit, rushed upon them with his powerful troops; meanwhile the duke returned upon them, and they, being thus hemmed in on both sides, numbers were stricken down. The miserable English, feeble and on foot, are scattered abroad. Pressed upon, they fall; they are slaughtered, and killed; and their king being overthrown by a chance blow, they fly in all directions, and seek their hiding places. And then, after an innumerable multitude had been slain on the field, or rather in their flight, a very great calamity presented itself before the eyes of all.

There lay between the hostile armies a certain dreadful precipice, caused either by a natural chasm of the earth, or by some convulsion of the elements. It was of considerable extent, and being overgrown with bushes or brambles was not very easily seen, and great numbers of men—principally Normans in pursuit of the English—were suffocated in it. For, ignorant of the danger, as they were running in a disorderly manner, they fell into the chasm and were fearfully dashed to pieces and slain. And the pit from this deplorable accident is still called *Malfosse*.[12]

shall overtake him. At last he shall flourish for a little time, but the decimation of Neustria (i.e. Normandy) shall hurt him. *For a people in wood and in iron coats shall come and revenge upon him his wickedness.*" (Dr. Giles's Translation.)

[12] *Malfosse.* This name was corrupted to "Manfosse" previously to 1302, when certain lands there situate were conferred upon the Abbey. I have taken some pains to ascertain the locality of this shocking incident, but can find no place which, in the ordinary use of language, can be called a "dreadful precipice." It has been conjectured that it occurred on some part of the stream (the *Asten*) which rises in the western part of Battel Park, and which supplies water for the powder-mills, and ultimately flows by Crowhurst and Bulverhithe into the sea; but this hypothesis is untenable, for the following reason. The attack of the Normans is plainly shown to have been made from the south and south-east, and any one who will take the trouble to examine the ground, will see that the retreat of the Saxons must have been in a north-westerly direction, by that division of Battel n

Amid these miseries there was exhibited a fearful spectacle: the fields were covered with dead bodies, and on every hand nothing was to be seen but the red hue of blood. The dales all around sent forth a gory stream which increased at a distance to the size of a river![13] How great, think you, must have been the slaughter of the conquered, when that of the conquerors is reported upon the lowest computation to have exceeded ten thousand? Oh! how vast a flood of human gore was poured out in that place where these unfortunates fell and were slain! What dashing to pieces of arms;

called Mountjoy. The ground here is certainly somewhat precipitous, descending to a stream of water which runs from Beech mill-pond to Whatlington, and becomes a tributary of the Rother. This stream still occasionally overflows its banks, and the primitive condition of the adjacent levels was doubtless that of a morass or swamp, overgrown with reeds and similar bog vegetables. Here then, in all likelihood, occurred the "great calâmity" so graphically described by our historian, although, thanks to good drainage, the 'bad ditch' (Mal-fosse) no longer remains. I may add, in confirmation of these remarks, that in 1279 Adam de Pycot released to Abbot Reginald nine acres of land called Wincestrecroft in *Mainfosse*. Now Wincestre Croft is still known, and lies in the direction specified—west by north of the town. The name of *Mountjoy* itself may be derived with nearly equal probability from two distinct sources. "*Mont-Joie*, among the French," says Bailey, "is a name by which they call heaps of stones laid together by pilgrims, in which they stick crosses, when they are come within view of the end of their journey." But Boyer defines *Mont-joie* as, "a heap of stones made by a French army as a *monument of victory*." Tradition supports the latter definition, asserting that it was on this hill, where the windmills now stand, that the Normans sounded the trumpet of victory, and called back their pursuing troops. This place is sometimes termed *Call-back* hill, a name popularly believed to have been given it from that circumstance. In antient documents, however, it is written Caldbec (the 'cold spring'), and a cold spring still exists on the spot. Caudbec in Normandy probably derives its name from the same Teutonic roots.

[13] The Conqueror is said to have given one portion of the field of battle the name of *Sanguelac*, or the 'Lake of Blood;' and a part of the present town of Battel is called *the Lake*, because, says tradition, of the vast quantity of blood there spilt—a very *sea*, as it were, of human gore. "There about," says Drayton (Polyolb., Song xvii,) "is a place which after rain always looks red, which some have attributed to a very bloody sweat of the earth as crying to Heaven for revenge of so great a slaughter."

> "—— *Asten* once distained with native English blood;
> Whose soil, when yet but wet with any little rain,
> Doth blush, as put in mind of those there sadly slain."

Unfortunately, however, for all this, the name of the place as written by our chronicler and his predecessors is *Santlache*, a word requiring a totally different etymology. The redness of the water here, and at many other places in the neighbourhood, is caused by the oxidization of the iron which abounds in the soil of the Weald of Sussex.

what clashing of strokes; what shrieks of dying men; what grief; what sighs, were heard! How many groans; how many bitter notes of direst calamity then sounded forth who can rightly calculate! What a wretched exhibition of human misery was there to call forth astonishment! In the very contemplation of it our pen fails us. Yet it is proper to add that, the battle being at length concluded, upon that triumph England submitted to the Normans.

The place being marked where the standard of this rash and hostile invasion[14] fell, the duke went forward with all haste to extend his authority. Having at length reached London, the chief city of the realm, he offered the citizens a treaty of peace, which they unwillingly accepted, though in the end they joyfully received him as the heir and lord. And some portion of the kingdom being now prudently pacified; by the consent of the magnates and nobles of the state, he was dignified with the throne and crown of the English monarchy, and invested with his well-deserved diadem, at the Nativity of Our Lord, as the one thousand and sixty-seventh year since his incarnation was coming in.[15]

Delay in the execution of the vow.

After this, he was engaged with numerous and weighty affairs, and could by no means in a short time unite and quiet the kingdom. This of course delayed the performance of many things which he had proposed to execute earlier. For the storming of towns, and the subjugation of stiff-necked rebels, occupied, for a long period, all his energies. In the end, however, prosperity attended the monarch so evidently chosen and promoted by God; so that neither the hostile machinations of his fellow-countrymen, nor the craft of his enemies, nor the threatening inroads of foreigners availed to injure him; while he, ever relying upon the assistance of Heaven, was mightily strengthened in the glory of his kingdom. And deservedly—since he was excellent in morality

[14] I.e., of course, Harold's—however strangely the phrase may sound.
[15] December 25, 1066.

munificent in liberality, remarkable for clemency, powerful in genius, constant in temper, valiant in arms, magnanimous in enterprise, successful in acquisition, pacific in government, studious in reforming and keeping the laws, a diligent cultivator of religion, entirely devoted to the welfare of the churches,[16] and what must needs be still more admired, while he himself ruled so many nations, Discretion, the nourisher of the virtues, so governed him, that he who was otherwise invincible, easily yielded to the gentle suggestions of reason. Thus he both largely augmented the limits of his empire, and beyond the hope of all in his time energetically governed his now quieted dominions, which he happily transmitted to his posterity. Thus far of these matters.

Now, since we may appear unnecessarily to have extended this exordium of our proposed narration, it will be proper more closely to examine, by diligent investigation, the materials thereof, and to show, as we have promised, the first beginnings of our place as it were by rule. The most illustrious King William, then, being engaged as we have shown with many cares, although he never lost sight of the obligations of his vow, yet by reason of the affairs which occupied his attention, he for some time delayed its fulfilment.

The foundation of the Abbey intrusted to Faber.

At length the demands of his conscience from within, and the constant suggestions of the monk William Faber from without, prevailed,and the king acceded to his wish; and inasmuch as he was considered a proper person, the king committed the erection of the work to him, and ordered him to fetch over certain brethren of his abbey, in order to found, on the field of battle, without further delay, an appropriate monastery.

This he cheerfully undertook to do, and going at once to Marmoutier brought over to England four monks of great reputation and piety, namely, Theobald, surnamed Vetulus,

[16] Hence all this praise!

William Coche, Robert of Bolonia, and Robert Blancard. These personages having viewed the scene of the battle, judged it an unsuitable site for so noble a building, but thought a lower place on the western side of the hill more eligible; and there, not to seem remiss in their undertaking, they built some little dwellings.[17] The place is to this day called *Herst*;[17*] and a certain thorn-tree growing there is a memorial of this circumstance.

The monks dislike the site;

The king on making careful enquiries as to the progress of the work, was told by the monks that the place where he had determined to build the abbey was situated upon a hill with a parched soil, dry, and destitute of water; and they entreated him that a more convenient spot in the immediate vicinity might be chosen for so important a work. Upon this the king grew angry, and commanded them with all haste to lay the foundations of the temple on the very place where he had achieved the victory over his enemy. Not daring to resist him, they complained of the scarcity of water; to which the king is reported to have replied in these memorable words: "If God spare my life, I will so amply provide for this place, that wine shall be more abundant here than water is in any other great abbey!" They next complained of the unfitness of the place, because, the ground being woody for some distance round, proper stone for the edifice could not be obtained; but the king, undertaking to defray all expenses out of his own treasury, sent ships to the town of Caen to

but William refuses to change it.

[17] "Mansiunculas."

[17*] *Herst.* This locality cannot be identified. Hyrst is Anglo-Saxon for wood, and there are some hundreds of places in this, and the adjoining county of Kent, whose names terminate with it, furnishing proof, if proof were required, of the woody nature of the district in Saxon times. At the date of the events under consideration, a great portion of the district in which Battel lies was still unreclaimed forest. Salehurst, Bathurst, Penhurst, Crowhurst, Hurstmonceux, Maplehurst, Ewhurst, Rickelhurst, Brethurst, Angmereshurst, Ticehurst, Sandhurst, Hawkhurst and many other '-hursts' lie within the compass of a few miles from Battel Abbey. Other places in the same tract of country are shown to have been to a great extent cleared at an earlier period, by the suffix '-field'; e. g. Catsfield, Ninfield, Netherfield, Westfield, Mountfield.

bring over abundance of that material for the work. And when, in compliance with the royal order, they had imported some part of the stone from Normandy, in the meantime, as is said, it was revealed to a certain religious matron, that upon digging in the place indicated to her in a vision, they would find plenty of stone for this purpose. They commenced a search accordingly, and, at no great distance from the boundary which had been marked out for the Abbey, found such an ample supply, that it plainly appeared, that a concealed treasure of it had been divinely laid in that very place from eternity, for the building there to be erected!

Materials found on the spot.

Thus at length were laid the foundations of this most excellent work, as it was then considered; and in accordance with the king's decree, they wisely erected the high altar upon the precise spot where the ensign of King Harold, which they call the Standard, was observed to fall. But although skilful men, influenced by no love of filthy lucre, had the superintendence of the work, the building went on but slowly, on account of some extortioners, who sought their own things rather than those of Jesus Christ, and laboured more in appearance than in truth. Meantime, also, the brethren built within the intended circuit of the monastery mean dwellings of little cost, for their own residence. And thus, by an evil example at first, things were put off from day to day, and the royal treasures allotted for the furtherance of the undertaking were improperly spent, and many things conferred upon the place by the king's devout liberality carelessly squandered.

The work proceeds but slowly.

No apology will be necessary for our having mentioned these things, to prove the good will of this noble king; for although by reason of his being concerned with so many affairs of importance, he was prevented, to his great grief, from visiting the place, and from doing for it what he had proposed to do; yet even from the circumstances named it

most plainly appears, that from the first he designed so ample a provision, that his devotion is worthy of continual remembrance.

While affairs were in this condition, it was suggested to the king that he should appoint as abbot, one of the brethren who had been brought over, and that the rest should be subservient to him. Robert Blancard was therefore elected to this office. And, influenced by devotion, he immediately went over to Marmoutier, his own abbey; but as he was returning, amidst the congratulations of all, and had nearly reached the English shore, by the mysterious judgment of God a tempest arose, and he was swallowed up by the cruel waves. Thus being taken from this world, he transmitted the rule allotted him to another, who by the divine dispensation had been foreordained. When this intelligence arrived, and was carried to the king, he took advice upon the subject, and sent William Faber, who still managed all the affairs of the place, to Marmoutier, to fetch over another of his brethren, named Gausbert, to undertake the government of the abbey. This Gausbert was a man of the greatest piety and clemency, and endowed with manifold virtues. Four of his monkish brethren accompanied him to his destination, namely, John, Hameline, Ainard, and Leffelm, who after a prosperous voyage arrived joyfully with him at the appointed place.

Robert Blancard, first abbot, drowned.

Gausbert, second abbot.

Thus was that venerable personage, Gausbert, by the royal pleasure, happily promoted to the government of the abbey, and consecrated before the altar of S. Martin of Battel, about the one thousand and seventy-sixth year of our Lord's incarnation; and being settled in his office, both the buildings of the Abbey and the number of the brethren steadily increased under his superintendence.

The king, not unmindful of the work he had undertaken, in order to perpetuate the memory of his victory, ordained that the place should hence-

The place named "Battel."

forward be called BATTEL. To the monastery he first granted and gave the Leuga lying around it, entirely free from all exaction and subjection of bishops, and from the domination and customs of earthly service of all other persons whatsoever, as is proved upon the testimony of his charters. And since the Abbey was the pledge of his royal crown, he determined in various ways to enrich it, not only with a liberal donation of lands, dignities, ornaments, and various riches, but also in the grace of religious service and in the number of its brethren—but, alas! he was prevented from executing his intention by death.

Description of the Abbey lands: the Leuga.

The lands of the Leuga, as described in the King's Book,[18] consist of these portions:

The Abbey of Battel holds a leuga[19] lying around it. It holds Boccham [that is Vochehant], and has there half a hide. Of this half hide there is one virgate lying without the leuga, and belonging to Croherste, which Walter Fitz-Lambert exchanged for a certain wood within the leuga, and it holds it for that reason. In Bece, which Osbert holds of the Earl of Eu,[20] three virgates. In Wasingate [that is Bothherstegate[21]], says the King's Book, the Abbey has a virgate; in fact, however, it is but half a one. In Wilminte,

[18] That is, of course, Domesday Book (f. 17, b.)

[19] *Leuga.* In the next paragraph but one, we are told that a leuga contains 12 (lineal) roods, the rood 40 perches, and the perch (16?) 16½ feet—7920 feet, or one mile and a half. Thus the abbey's demesne, or home territory, comprised a circle of 1½ mile radius, or 3 miles diameter. That this area was set out by regular measurement, and not, as some have supposed, by mere guess-work, is proved by a subsequent passage in this Chronicle which mentions some legal proceedings against the abbey regarding the possession of certain lands, when its right was established by an appeal to the measuring line. Had no subsequent acquisitions of land been made, the manor of Battel would have been circular; but previously to the erection of the district into a parish, many contiguous lands were added, which accounts for the existing irregularity of the boundary.

[20] The Count De Augi or Eu was the intimate friend and counsellor of the duke, who rewarded his services with the Rape of Hastings. His antient seignory in Normandy was at La Ville d'Eu, now the property of the heirs of the late Louis Philippe.

[21] The words in brackets have been added in a later hand.

says the same record, the Abbey possesses six virgates, though it has really but five. In Nirefeld [Nedrefeld] it has six virgates. In Peneherste half a hide. In Hou half a hide. In Philesham one virgate. In Cattesfelde three virgates. In Bulintune two hides, wanting one virgate. In Croherste one virgate. In Wiltinges one virgate. In Holintune one virgate. Total: six hides and a half virgate.

All these lands are within the Leuga as has been stated, and the Leuga is composed of them, which the abbey of Battel possesses. This King William made free and quit of every custom of earthly service and of all subjection of bishops, especially of the Bishop of Chichester, and from the domination, oppression, and exaction of all other persons whatsoever, as before said, and confirmed it by his charter.

Now eight virgates make one hide;[22] and a wist consists of four virgates. The English leuga contains twelve roods; and forty perches make a rood. The perch is sixteen feet in length. The acre is forty perches in length and four in breadth. But if it be twenty in length, it shall be eight in breadth, and so forth.

Boundary of the Leuga.

From without Bodeherste,[23] on the east, is the boundary of the Leuga, near the land of Robert Bos, and it runs near the land of Roger Moin as far as Hecilande, and includes Hecilande, near the land of William Fitz-Robert-Fitz-Wido and the land of Croherste[24] on the south. Thence it passes by the land of Cattesfelde[25] and

[22] The editor of the Latin edition remarks: "This is a passage of great importance, as tending to show the measurement of land in this country." He suggests, however, that there is some blundering in the use of terms. I confess my inability to understand it fully.

[23] *Bathurst* lies in the eastern part of Battel parish, adjoining Westfield. It was given by Walter le Bœuf (Bos) to the abbey. In after times it gave name to the family of Bathurst, Earl Bathurst, who had a castle here. "They were dispossessed," says Collins, "and their castle demolished, in the troublesome times of the dispute between the houses of York and Lancaster." He adds, "Nothing now remains but a wood called Bathurst-wood, where may be found some of the ruins." (*Peerage*, vol. vii, p. 195, edit. 1768.)

[24] *Crowhurst.*

[25] *Catsfield.*

by Puchehole[26] as far as Westbece[27] near the land of Bodeham to the west. After this it passes along by the land of Itintune[28] as far as to the north. Thence there is a boundary by the land of Wetlingetuna,[29] and the land of Wicham and by Setlescumbe,[30] and thus it returns to the first limit, namely without Bodeherste on the east.

The Leuga being thus brought into the possession of the Abbey, and the building of the Abbey meanwhile going forward, a goodly number of men were brought hither out of the neighbouring counties and some even from foreign countries. And to each of these, the brethren who managed the building allotted a dwelling-place of certain dimensions around the circuit of the abbey; and these still remain as they were then first apportioned, with their customary rent or service. The order of the messuages is as follows :[31]—

Names and rentals of the tenants.

1. The first messuage[32] stands by the gate of the Abbey, near the house of the pilgrims, which is called the Hospital, on the north side. It was BRIHTWIN'S, who had been Bedel.

2. The second was REINBALD DE BECHE'S. Both of these pay sevenpence per annum at Michaelmas, and find a man for one day only, to make hay in the meadows of Bodeham, and the like at the reparations of the mill: they shall also make each one seam[33] of malt.

[26] *Hodie*, Foxhole.

[27] *West Beech* lies in the western part of the parish. The old mansion (now a farm-house) antiently belonged to the family of Beche, whose name frequently figures in the records of the monastery. Bodeham must not be confounded with *Bodiham*.

[28] *Ittington* lane still exists.

[29] *Watlington*.

[30] *Sedlescombe*.

[31] This enumeration of the inhabitants of an English town, and their rents and feudal services in the 12th century, is one of the most interesting features of this volume, and may perhaps be regarded as unique. The arrangement of the houses corresponds generally with the existing form of the town. A similar catalogue of the inhabitants of the neighbouring town of Winchelsea, temp. Edw. I, is printed in Mr. W. D. Cooper's excellent History of Winchelsea, 1850.

[32] *Mansura*.

[33] A seam (*summa*) was the ordinary horse-load of eight bushels.

3. Next to these is the messuage of WULMER, which likewise pays sevenpence at the same term, and performs the like work.

4. The messuage of MALGAR, the smith, 7*d.* also and labour.

5. That of ÆLFRIC DOT, 7*d.* and labour.

6. „ WILLIAM the shoemaker, 7*d.* and labour.

7. „ EDWARD GOTCILD,[34] 7*d.* and labour.

8. „ RALPH DUCG, 7*d.*

9. „ GILBERT, the weaver, 7*d.* and labour.

10. „ DERING PIONIUS, 7*d.* and labour.

11. „ LEGARD, 7*d.* and labour.

12. „ ELFWIN TREWA, 7*d.* and labour.

13. „ GODIEVE, 7*d.* and labour.

14. „ GODWIN, son of Colsuein, 6*d.* and labour.

15. „ GODWIN, the cook, 6*d.* and labour.

16. „ EDWARD, the scourer, 7*d.* and labour.

17. „ ROBERT, the miller, 7*d.* and labour.

18. „ ROBERT DE HAVENA, 7*d.* and labour.

19. „ SELAF, the herdsman, 7*d.* and labour.

20. „ WULRIC, the goldsmith, 7*d.* and labour.

21. „ WILLIAM PINEL, 7*d.* and labour.

22. „ LAMBERT, the shoemaker, 7*d.* and labour.

23. „ ORDERIC, the swineherd, 7*d.* and labour.

24. „ SEVUGEL COCHEC, 5*d.* at Michaelmas, and labour;

25, and 5*d.* on St. Thomas's day with labour for the adjoining messuage.

26. The messuage of BLACHENI, the cowherd, 7*d.* and labour.

27. That of WILLIAM GREI, 7*d.* and labour.

28. „ ROBERT, the son of SIFLET, 7*d.* and labour.

29. „ SEWARD GRIS, 6*d.* and labour.

30. „ ÆLFRIC, the steward, 7*d.* and labour.

[34] Goodchild?

31. That of WULFWIN HERT, with the land about it, 11*d.* and labour.

32, 33. Near the parish church of S. Mary on the west is the messuage of LEFWI NUC, which, at the term aforesaid, viz., Michaelmas, pays 7*d.* and labour.

34. After that comes the messuage of GILBERT, the stranger, which with its appurtenant land is free and quit, except the tithe of the land which it pays, and two services yearly; one to Canterbury; the other to London.

35. That of ÆLFRIC DE DENGEMAREIS[35] is free, except only that it makes summons of the land of the said Ælfric in Dengemareis, when it ought to do service.

36. That of BENNET, the sewer, is entirely free.

37. „ MAURICE, 7*d.* and labour.

38. „ ÆDRIC, who cast the bells,[36] 7*d.* and labour.

39. „ GUNNILD, 7*d.* and labour.

40. „ BURNULPH, the carpenter, 7*d.*

41. „ ÆILRIC CILD,[37] 7*d.* and labour.

42. „ AEILNOD, the shoemaker, 7*d.* and labour.

43. „ FRANCEFANT, 7*d.* and labour.

44, 45. AELDWIN, the cook, two, 13*d.* and labour.

46. „ EMMA, 7*d.* and labour.

47. „ AELSTRILD NONNA, 6*d.* and labour.

48. „ PETER, the baker, 7*d.* and labour.

49, 50. SEWIN, two, 13*d.* and labour.

51. „ ROBERT DE CIRISI, 15*d.* and labour.

52. „ MATHELGAR RUFF, 7*d.* and labour.

53. „ SIWARD STIGEROP,[38] 7*d.* and labour.

54. „ GOLDWIN, 7*d.* and labour.

[35] Dengemarsh, co. Kent; see a subsequent page.

[36] "*Qui signa fundebat*" should, according to a correspondent in *Notes and Queries*, be thus translated. The bells alluded to are doubtless those of the Abbey.

[37] "*Child.*" It will be observed that a great proportion of the inhabitants of Battel, judging by their names, were of Saxon extraction.

[38] Stigrap, A.S. stirrup; probably a sobriquet.

55. That of EDWIN, the smith, 7*d.* and labour.
56, 57. SEVUGEL,[39] two, 10*d.* and labour.
58. „ GOTSELIN, 7*d.* and labour.
59. „ RUSSELL, 7*d.* and labour.
60. „ LAMBERT, 8*d.* and labour.
61. „ AILRIC, the baker, 12*d.* and labour.
62. „ AEILNOD, the son of FAREMAN, 8*d.* and labour.
63. „ GILBERT, the clerk, 7*d.* and labour.
64. „ LEFWIN, the baker, 13*d.* and labour.
65. „ HEROD, 11*d.* and labour.

On the other side of the street.

66. „ ORGAR, 14*d.* and labour.
67. „ CHEBEL,[40] 7*d.* and labour.
68. „ DERING, 7*d.* and labour.
69. „ LEFFELM, 7*d.* and labour.
70. „ BENWOLD GEST,[41] 7*d.* and labour.
71. „ WULFRIC, the swineherd, 5*d.* and labour.
72. „ EMMA, 7*d.* and labour.
73. „ SLOTE, 7*d.* and labour.
74. „ GOSFRID, the cook, 7*d.* and labour.
75. „ GODFREY, 5*d.* and labour.
76. „ LEFWIN HUNGER, 7*d.* and labour.
77. „ EDWIN KNIGHT, 5*d.* and labour.
78. „ GOLDSTAN, 7*d.* and labour.
79. „ WULBALD WINNOC, 7*d.* and labour.
80. „ BREMBEL, 6*d.* and labour.
81. „ ROBERT BARATE, 6*d.* and labour.
82. „ LEFFLET LOUNGE, 3*d.*
83. „ EDILDA TIPA, 5*d.* and labour.
84, 85. GOLDING, 5*d.* and labour; of another adjoining

[39] Sea-fowl.
[40] Keble?
[41] Gest, A. S., guest. This name, and several others, as Hart, Child, Siflet, Knight, Barret, still designate Sussex families.

it 5*d.*, and for this he neither makes malt, nor finds a man for the meadows nor for the mill.

86. That of ÆLFRIC CURLEBASSE, 7*d.* and labour.

On the eastern side of S. Mary's.

87. The messuage of WULFWIN SCOT, 7*d.* and labour.
88. „ HUGH, the secretary, 7*d.* and labour.
89. „ HUMFREY, the priest, 7*d.* and labour.
90. „ PAGAN PECHE, 7*d.* and labour.
91. „ DURAND, 7*d.* and labour.

On the other side of the street.

92. „ JULIOT WOLF, 7*d.* and labour.
93. „ AELFWIN ABBAT, 7*d.* and labour.
94. „ SIWARD CRULL, 5*d.* and labour.
95. „ SEVUGEL CANNARIUS,[42] — and labour.
96. „ BRICTRIC, the gardener,[43] 7*d.* and labour.
97. „ AELWIN, the secretary, 5*d.* and labour.
98. „ CHENEWARD, 5*d.* and labour.
99. „ BALDWIN, the shoemaker, 5*d.* and labour.
100. „ OSBERT PECHET, 8*d.* and labour.
101. „ COCARD, 5*d.* and labour.

On the other side of the way near the monks' wall.

102. The messuage of AELFWIN HACHET at S. Thomas's day, 7*d.* and labour.
103. „ AEILNOTH HECA, 7*d.* and labour.
104. „ BLACHEMAN OF BODEHERSTEGATE, 7*d.* and labour.
105. „ REINBALD GENESTER, 7*d.* and labour.
106. „ AELFRIC CORVEISER, 7*d.* and labour.
107. „ BRICTRIC BARHE, 7*d.* and labour.
108. „ AELFWIN TURPIN, 7*d.* and labour.
109. „ ROGER BRACEUR, 7*d.* and labour.

[42] Perhaps a dog-trainer. [43] Ortolanus.

110. That of WALTER RUFF, 7*d.* and labour.
111. „ HUMFREY GENESTER, 7*d.* and labour.
112. „ GODWIN GISARD, 7*d.* and labour.
113. „ SIWARD CRULL, 5*d.* and labour.
114. „ BRUNREVE, 8*d.* and labour.
115. „ WULFWIN, the carpenter, 8*d.* and labour.

Customary services.

The town of Battel, then, up to this time, consists of these separate messuages. And all these, as we before stated, ought to find for one day a man for every house, for the labour of the meadows, and for the reparations of the mill, and every man shall have a loaf and a half with other necessary food.[44] And if needful, they are bound to make malt, every one a seam. A servant of the monks, with their own horse, must carry the seams to every house, and deliver them to the tenants. When the malt is made, the tenants ought to return it at the Abbey by measure, and for that day every one should receive two loaves, with good *companage*. Likewise at the labour of the meadows or the mill, if it shall be necessary to go thither more than is just, they may not be compelled, yet being entreated, they shall go if able. But he who is preoccupied with some other business and unable to go, shall not be sued or fined on that account. The same rule holds good as to the making of malt.

Privileges of the Townsmen.

The men of this town, on account of the very great dignity of the place, are called BURGESSES. If these in any way deviate from customary right and be sued for penalties, the cause shall be tried before the abbot or monks, or their deputies, and upon conviction they shall pay a fine of 50 shillings, according to royal custom, and give a bond at the discretion of the president.[45] When a

[44] "Companagium," whatever was eaten with the bread, whether fish, cheese, or the like; from "cum" and "panis."

[45] This, according to the laws of Wessex, was the customary fine for a breach of the king's peace.

new abbot comes to office, the burgesses shall pay him 100 shillings for their liberties.

Description of lands within the Leuga.

Hitherto we have confined ourselves to those things which pertain to the town. Let us now describe those which are without the town, within the Leuga. And let no one blame us for having described the lands and boundaries of the leuga otherwise than they are entered in the king's book. Formerly, the lands of the leuga were divided as they are there described, but under succeeding abbots they have been divided as they thought best. The leuga is parcelled into wists, which in other places are called virgates.

In Uccheham[46] are three wists in domain. There are also in Uccheham four wists and a half, the holders of which shall pay, for each, three shillings a year, and shall do in the fourth week all the labour allotted to them. On the sabbath, they shall go with their own horse whithersoever they are ordered.

Between Hecheland[47] *and Bodeherste* is one wist, with the like labour and pence.

In *Telleham*[48] are held seven wists, which shall do all the labour in the manner above described. But one of them is free from these labours, because as often as the holder of it shall be summoned, he shall go with his own horse, with a monk or with any other person, whithersoever he is ordered. For this service he is likewise exempt from the rent of pence. Both going and returning, he shall have from the Abbey an allowance for his horse. He shall also have entertainment, and shoes for his horse. And if his horse die on the journey, the monks shall make good the loss.

[46] *Uckham* is the name of one of the "boroughs" in the liberty of Battel. The land bearing this designation lies on the east of the old London Road, adjoining Petley Wood.

[47] *Hetheland*, a spot between Battel and Hastings, where the first preparations for the battle took place. See page 3.

[48] *Telham* is in the same direction. To suit a popular tradition, that the Conqueror counted his forces on this spot, the name has been corrupted to "Tell-man Hill."

In *La Stene* is one wist, which pays the said pence and does the labour.

In *Richelherste* are five wists, which pay the aforesaid pence and labour.

In *Puchehole* is one wist, which is also subject to the labour and pence.

In *Beche* are three wists, the holder of which must, during half the year, have ready a horse, at the summons of the abbot, fit for the riding of the abbot or one of his monks, and, as often as necessary, he shall go with his horse wherever he is ordered; horse-shoes and nails being found at the expense of the abbot and monks. For this service he shall be free from the rent of pence; but if he shall not do it, he shall pay ten shillings a year for the land.

In *Dunintune* lie three wists, which pay the before-mentioned rent and labour.

Besides these, the leuga includes three woods, namely, *Hecheland*, *Bodeherste*, and *Petlee*,[49] and a fourth, which is called *Duniford*.

There are likewise three orchards: one adjoining the Abbey to the south; another near the house called the Hospital; and a third by the church of S. Mary, to the north, where also the monks' garden usually is.

The Abbey has also three mills in domain. Two within the leuga, namely, one under *Loxebeche*,[50] another lower down in the valley, and a third partly within and partly without the leuga, to the south of the Abbey, at a place called *Piperinge*,[51] the part without the leuga being that which was exchanged with the lord of Cattesfelde, for a certain little meadow lying in *Bulintune* near *Bulworehethe*.[52]

Thus far of these: now let us speak of the lands which are in domain within the leuga.

[49] *Petley*.

[50] *Loxbeech* is near the powder-mills.

[51] Now corrupted to *Pepper-in-eye!* Here stand the well-known powder-mills.

[52] *Bulverhythe*, on the coast between Bexhill and Hastings.

In *Petlee* is one wist in domain, which one Oter formerly held. It consists of forty-eight acres.

In *Catecumbe* are five acres, lying near Wetlingetune.

Between *Petlee* and *Uccheham* lie forty-two acres, reaching to the road leading from Battel to Wetlingetune.

In *Uccheham* are three wists, with the meadow called Hanwisse.

Bodeherstegate, as far as the road near Hechilande, lies a very large uncultivated plain.

In *Hechilande* are two wists.

In *Santlache*, reaching as far as the infirmary, are held 31 acres: this place is called *Dune*.

On the other side of the way, where was formerly a part of the vineyard, and in *Celvetege*, which are on the south side of the church, are reckoned 36 acres.

In the land of *Chapenore*, near them, are 15 acres, besides 12 acres which the church of S. Mary has.

Between *Bodeherste* and *Hechilande*, and between the infirmary and Chapenore, and as far as the land of Telleham, are computed 37 acres.

There is a certain land, lying between the orchard adjoining the Abbey and the park,[53] which is on the south side. It is called *Quarrere*, and contains four acres.

On the other side of the road, by the orchard, adjacent to the hospital, are two acres in *Herste*.

Near these is a messuage with two acres of land, where the vestments of the monks are washed; where also there are three acres more.

There, also, on the west side, are eight acres.

Near them, towards the south, there are likewise eight acres of demesne.

In *Loxbece* are held two wists.

On the west side of the town lie ten acres of excellent land, some of which being tilled, yields abundance of corn.

[53] Vivarium.

In *Bretherste*[54] are eleven acres.

In *Plesseiz*[55] the land consists of 15 acres.

There also, near them, to the north, are 18 acres.

Besides these there are some lands which pay a rent, without labour, thus:

In *Uccheham* is one acre, which pays 4*d.* Near the town, on the east, are 11 acres, belonging to the fee of Uccheham, which pay 11*d.* This land is called Cook's land.

Next to them lie five acres, reaching to Santlache, which likewise pay 5*d.*

There is also one acre where the house called the *Gildhall* stands.

Near *Strellewelle* are four acres, which Gilbert the stranger held, and his heirs after him. It is called *Wrench's* land, which also is free for the service that the tenant is bound to render with his horse, to go whithersoever he is ordered, as before mentioned.

Gildhalls and their regulations.

There are two *Gildhalls* in the town; one above mentioned in Santlache, called the GILD OF S. MARTIN.

The other on the west side of the town, at a place called *Claverham.*[56]

And there is a third out of the town, hard by the park which is below *Quarrere,*[57] for the use of the churls[58] who live out of the town.

In these gilds, the abbot is bound at certain times, as a member thereof, to find his share towards the making of ale, and he shall have his deputy, who shall everywhere sit in his stead, and drink with the rest.

[54] *Bredehurst*, in the parish of Brede. It gave name to a family, one of whom, John de Bredeherste, was steward of the abbey lands in Icklesham in 1273.

[55] *Plesseiz*, Norman-French for a park. This spot was called the abbot's Plessies or Plessette. It now forms part of Little Park farm, and lies northward of the town.

[56] The western part of Battel town bears this name, and traces of *this* guildhall are supposed to exist in the house of Mr. Sargent.—*Vidler's Gleanings.*

[57] I cannot find this locality. It may have derived its name from its proximity to the *quarry* whence the stone for the Abbey had been procured.

[58] "*Ad opus rusticorum*"—the lowest grade of freemen.

And the elders of the gilds ought to offer tapers, collected from every tenant, upon the high altar of S. Martin.

In case of any forfeiture when the gilds happen to drink, it shall belong to themselves, if it chance within the pale of the gilds; if beyond, it shall belong to the abbot. For the dead, the abbot shall not give anything with the other members.[59]

Here begins the Book concerning the site of the Abbey of Battel, and the possessions given to it by King William and others.[60]

Foundation of Battel Abbey.

IN the year of the incarnation of our Lord 1066, William, the most noble Duke of Normandy, sailed over into England with a powerful army, in order to recover this realm, which had been bequeathed to him by his kinsman King Edward, from the hands of Harold (who had fraudulently usurped it), and possess it for himself as the rightful heir.

Harold, hearing of his arrival, marched against him with his army, and the most valiant duke met him courageously at the place which is now called BATTEL. When the duke was armed for the engagement, he called together his barons and knights, and urged them, both by persuasions and promises, to acquit themselves faithfully in the conflict. And in order to animate

[59] The last few paragraphs furnish an interesting illustration of olden manners. These guilds were voluntary associations, with pretty much the same objects as the *clubs* of our own days. We find them existing in Saxon times, previously to the reign of Athelstan, and continued with some modifications up to the time of the Reformation. It is rather singular that there should have been in so small a place as Battel *three* fraternities of this kind. The abbot patronised all three, but as it would have been beneath his dignity to sit down to his ale with tradesmen, artificers, and especially with "churls," he attended on every occasion by deputy. On the death of a guild-brother his brethren were bound to make an offering for his soul's health, usually a penny (or rather a *pennyworth*, for it sometimes consisted of bread and *companage*); but from this payment the abbot was exempt.

[60] This "Liber de situ" is the work of another hand, which the author of the Chronicon has introduced into his manuscript. The word "anno," with which it commences, has a splendid initial, representing the Conqueror seated in his coronation chair.

their courage, in their presence and with their concurrence, he made a *vow* unto God, that if He would vouchsafe him a victory over his foes, he would as freely and entirely dedicate that place to God as he sought it for himself, and that he would build a monastery, in which the servants of God might dwell together for the salvation of them all, but especially of those who should fall in the approaching battle—and that it should be a place of refuge and help for all, that, by the continual efficacy of good works, atonement might be made for the deeds of bloodshed there committed. Encouraged by these words, they engage manfully, and in the end, on the fourteenth of October, God being their helper, the enemy is overthrown and his army routed; and they gain the victory.

The tyranny of the enemy being everywhere overthrown, and almost all England quieted in a short space of time, the same year, this powerful duke, ensigned with the royal diadem, was honourably raised to the sovereignty of the whole realm, at London, in a manner befitting so illustrious a person, and in the presence of the chief estates of the kingdom. He was anointed and crowned by that venerable personage, Aldred, archbishop of York; Stigand, archbishop-elect of Canterbury, being hostile to his interests.

Monks invited from Marmoutier.

The king, not ungrateful for the favour which God had shown him, felt much interested in the good work he had proposed to himself; and greatly desiring to carry his vow into effect, he commanded the erection upon the battle-field of a monastery suitable for so important a victory. And as he had determined to dedicate it to the honour of the Holy Trinity and the blessed Mary, as well as of the blessed Martin, the confessor of Christ, he sent to Marmoutier for certain monks of S. Martin, to superintend the work and lay the foundation of monastic service; that the erection of the Abbey, and the rule of religion might go on together hand-in-hand. And to facilitate the work, he gave them unlimited access to his treasuries, regardless of expense

in the fulfilment of his vow. But strange children, seeking their own things more than Jesus Christ's, went about their work but negligently. Still, however, the building went on from day to day; and as the king was resolved to endow it with great possessions and royal dignities, so because by the grace of the Thunderer[61] he had there obtained for himself and his heirs a victory and a kingdom, he desired that, in order to keep his triumph in continual remembrance, the place might be called BATTEL. And there he determined to settle a congregation of sixty monks at the least, purposing, upon the dedication of the church, so to enrich it, that it should remain to all time a brotherhood of monks seven score in number. Thus "*Man proposes, but God disposes*;" for he was not permitted to carry that resolution into effect, since, alas! death, which spares neither king nor beggar, intervened! He left, however, to his monks a memorial of his love, in appointing for their daily use, bread fit for the table of a king, which is commonly called *Simenel*[62] thirty-six ounces by weight, and one-fourth more during Lent, that something might remain for charity.

Privileges granted by William.

To this his Abbey of S. Martin of Battel, by his royal authority he gave and granted the privilege of holding its own court, with royal liberties, and the right of negociating its own affairs, and the execution of justice. And, in order that it might be free and quit for ever, he likewise exempted it from all episcopal authority and levies, as well as from all claims of Marmoutier and all persons whatsoever, even as Christ Church, Canterbury, is. And if any person guilty of theft, manslaughter, or any other crime should, through fear of death, take refuge in this Abbey, he should receive no injury, but depart entirely free. And if

[61] "Tonantis gratia"!

[62] *Simnel*: the finest sort of bread. In Shropshire the word is still in use to designate a kind of cake. It will be recollected that *Lambert Simnel*, the pretended earl of Warwick, temp. Hen. VII, was a baker's lad, who had been trained for the character by Simon the priest. This was no regular surname, but a mere sobriquet allusive to his trade.

the abbot should chance, anywhere throughout the realm of England, to meet any condemned thief, robber, or other criminal, he should be at liberty to release him from punishment. All treasure found within its lands should also belong entirely to the Abbey, as also the punishment of homicide if it should occur there; and further, all its tenants should be everywhere exempt from toll and from every custom of earthly service—as the charters testify.

He gave moreover to the Abbey, in everlasting possession, the Leuga around it, to be free and quit for ever from all geld,[63] scot, hidage and Danegeld, and from the labour of bridges, and castles, and parks, and inclosures, and military levies, and from all pleas, and aids, and plaints, and from shires, and hundreds, and from lastage, with sac and soc, and thol and theam, and infangthef, and warpeni, and hamsoken, and forstal, and blodwite, and cildwite, and latrocinium, and from every custom of earthly service, and from all exaction and subjection of the bishops of Chichester, and from the rule of all persons whatsoever; so that it should be subject to the authority of no person except the abbot and his monks. Neither should any one presume, either within the Abbey itself or in any of its possessions, to implead or hunt, or exercise any business whatsoever, without permission, on pain

[63] *Geld*, tax; *scot*, a proportionate impost of various kinds; *hidage*, a royal aid paid for every hide of land; *Danegeld*, a tax imposed on our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, of 12*d.* upon every hide within the realm, for clearing the seas of Danish pirates: it was abolished in later Norman times; *lastage*, custom payable in fairs and markets; *saka*, *sac* the jurisdiction of manorial courts; *soka*, *soc*, right of courts; *thol*, toll; *theam*, power of judging and restraining dependents and criminals; *infangthef*, the power of seizing a guilty person within one's own manor; *warpeni* (war-penny) a contribution towards war or the provision of arms; *hamsoken*, assaults committed in the house; burglaries; *forstal*, exemption from fines for cattle arrested within one's own land (Bailey); otherwise defined as obstructions on the highway; *blodwite*, a customary penalty for the shedding of blood; *cildwite* or *giltwite*, amends for a transgression; *latrocinium*, the privilege of trying and executing criminals. These are the definitions given by several authorities, but there is much uncertainty as to some of them. The meanings of several of the terms had probably been lost at the time of the Conquest, even among the Anglo-Saxons; and "some Norman charters, while they confirm the privileges, frankly state that they do not know the meaning of the words they are confirming." (*Kemble's Codex Diplomaticus*, vol. i, p. xliii.)

of royal forfeiture.[64] And if anything be taken by chance it should belong to the Abbey and not be carried away.

Progress of the establishment.

In the meantime many religiously-affected persons came together there, and many others offered their sons to be trained up for the service of God. The king promoted the welfare of the Abbey by every means in his power, and appointed one of the monks whom he had brought over from Marmoutier—an able man, wholly devoted to religion, Gausbert by name—to be abbot of the monastery, with this condition, that neither he, nor any of his successors, should in any way be subject to Marmoutier; and that he should by his prudence carry on the service of religion—as yet new in that place—to perfection; and that after him for ever, whomsoever the congregation of the brethren should unanimously and regularly elect, should, with the king's consent, succeed, as abbot of the society of the Abbey of Battel.

The bishop of Chichester's dispute with abbot Gausbert.

Gausbert being thus elected, Stigand, bishop of Chichester, would by no means agree to consecrate him, unless he would go to Chichester for that purpose. The prudent abbot therefore went to the king, to state his case, and to ask what he should do. When the king learnt how the matter stood, he was very angry, and threateningly commanded the bishop that, laying aside all objections, he should consecrate the abbot in the church of S. Martin of Battel. He commanded, moreover, that neither

[64] How far this privilege was maintained, I cannot say. In the reign of Henry VIII, however, it seems to have been lost, for in 1517, the mayor and jurats of Rye asserted and established their claim to have the trial of a felon for an offence committed within their jurisdiction, against the abbot of Battel. One John Burrell stole a horse at Rye, and escaped with it to Alfriston, which was situated within the abbatial manor of Alciston. He was taken to Battel and lodged in the gateway-prison under the care of the porter. The mayor demanded that the man and horse should be surrendered to him. The abbot refused; but obtained a warrant for Burrell's committal to the King's Bench. A law-suit now arose, and the mayor triumphed. Burrell was removed to Rye, and, proving himself a clergyman, escaped the heavier infliction of the law, but was burnt with a T. (thief) on the brawn of his left hand. (*Vide Jeake's Charters of the Cinque Ports.*)

he nor his attendants should on that day have lodging or food in the Abbey according to custom, as a testimony of its exemption from his jurisdiction. This was accordingly done, and abbot Gausbert was consecrated before the altar of S. Martin, and collated to his office by the bishop; and this became a memorial to his successors, that the monastery of Battel was as free from all exaction and subjection of the bishops of Chichester as if it were the king's own chapel; and that no one had any claim upon it or its possessions, beyond what might be freely bestowed for charity.

He also provided that when the abbot should go to court he should have diet.[65]

He also allotted him *Inns* at London and at Winchester.[66]

Now abbot Gausbert, in consequence of his favour with the monarch, coupled with his own prudent behaviour, obtained a very honourable position among the chief men of the kingdom. The bishop of Chichester, however, was a source of frequent annoyance to him. He summoned him to appear at the synod of Chichester, as if the abbacy had appertained to his diocese, and sought to oppress him by many claims, with a design to open a way whereby he might reduce it or its possessions under his authority and that of his church. To avoid such subjugation, the abbot again brought the matter into the king's court, and when it had been examined, it was decided in council, that the bishop should not intrude at all into the Abbey, or its circumjacent leuga, but that the abbot himself should be judge and lord therein, so that the servants of God, exempt from worldly cares, might wholly devote themselves to God and the salvation of souls,[67] and that they should govern their Abbey and its leuga in temporals and spirituals. And the bishop thereupon, with the royal autho-

[65] *Liberationem*, literally, a delivery (of provisions).

[66] The abbot's town-house or Inn, in London, stood in the parish of S. Olave, Southwark, and gave name to *Battle-bridge*. "Batelbrige," (*Valor Eccl.*)

[67] The printed copy reads "saluti *omnium*"—qy., *animarum ?*

rity, confirmed all these privileges. A good understanding being thenceforward established between those venerable personages, the bishop by his own authority further decreed, that if his diocese should on any account be laid under an episcopal interdict, the church of S. Martin of Battel should not be included in it; and if during the interdict any brother or sister of the said church, dying within the diocese, could not have burial, that the church of S. Martin of Battel, if required, should have liberty of sepulture without any episcopal interference, provided that the person to be buried should not have been the cause of the interdict. And if forfeitures of Christianity should in anywise happen within the leuga, they must be brought before the abbot for determination, the Abbey to have the correction of the forfeitures, and the bishop the imposition of the penance.

And as it was permitted, up to that time, for every one to pay his tithes where or to whomsoever he would, many of those who resided in the neighbourhood assigned theirs to the Abbey in perpetuity; and these being confirmed by episcopal authority, remain payable to the Abbey until this day.

At that period all the residents in the leuga, and very many beyond its limits belonging to the parish, attended divine service in the church of S. Martin of Battel, and there was a certain chaplain, who lived, with his clerk, in the court of the monks, and had all necessaries there. He performed all ministerial duties for the parishioners under the control of the abbot; and all the oblations, tithes, and benefices accrued to the Abbey itself, without let or hindrance.

The monks of Marmoutier desire to subjugate Battel Abbey.

Abbot Gausbert paid a visit for devotion's sake to Marmoutier, where he had formerly been a monk; and the abbot and convent of that establishment on this occasion sought an opportunity of subjecting Battel Abbey to their government. They endeavoured to cause the abbot to receive ordination in their chapter-house, and thenceforward to compel him to go thither

as often as they should summon him. But Gausbert perceived their design, and when, after his return to England, he was repeatedly summoned to Marmoutier, refused to comply, but repaired to court and complained to the king. Whereupon the king was angry, and ordered all the monks of Marmoutier who were with him to be sent away. He even threatened the abbot himself: "By the splendour of God," said he—for that was his accustomed oath—"if you have crossed the seas with this design, or if ever you go thither again, you shall never return to the charge of my abbacy." The abbot obeyed, and thus quieted all claims of this kind, and the king confirmed the Abbey of Battel in its freedom from all subjection to Marmoutier for ever.

The better part of the land in the town of Battel and in the leuga being retained in domain, many persons were brought out of the neighbouring counties, and some from beyond the seas,[68] who prepared themselves habitations according to the distribution of the abbot and monks. These, who are in other respects free, have from that time been accustomed to pay to the Abbey the fixed charge of the land, with certain customary services.

Donation of the manor of Wye.

The same illustrious monarch, king William, also gave to the Abbey the royal manor of *Wye*[69] in Kent, with all its appendages of seven *suilingæ*, that is hides, from his royal crown, with all its liberties and royal

[68] To this passage a later hand has added the following marginal remark:—"This should be noted in opposition to those who say that there was (previously) a town in this place which was called *Sothope*." When or why the tradition, that Battel stands upon the site of an older town, originated, I cannot say; but it is not yet obsolete, and many respectable writers have asserted that the place was originally called *Epiton*, a mistake originating in the use, by Ordericus Vitalis, of the word 'epitonium' in the sense of 'field.'

[69] Wye, concerning which frequent mention occurs in the subsequent pages, is a town of 1600 inhabitants, lying four miles N.E. of Ashford. The "royal manor of Wye" Lambarde considers ("as farre as he can reach by coniecture") to be the district now known as the Lathe of Scray, and comprising a fifth part of the county of Kent. (*Perambulation of Kent*, edit. 1826, p. 257.) About 1440, John Kempe, cardinal-archbishop of Canterbury, founded a college here, upon lands which he purchased of the abbot and convent. After an existence of about a century, the establishment was dissolved by

customs, as freely and entirely as he himself held them, or as a king could give them, and exempt from all gelds and scots and other burdens previously mentioned, and from all manner of earthly service.

When he conferred this manor upon the Abbey, this much-to-be-commended prince is reported to have uttered some remarkable and memorable words. To certain persons who were expressing their surprise at his great liberality, he said: "*I take it away from my body and confer it upon my soul,*" and added, "*if my body was able without let or hindrance to hold it, it is fitting that my soul, which is the better part of man, should possess it, if possible, still more freely and undisturbedly.*"

To this manor has belonged from a remote period a dignity beyond others, that it should be paramount, with its hundred, to twenty-two hundreds and a half within its franchise. As often as these are bound to appear at county or other customary assemblies, the sheriff of Kent, upon the time and place being fixed, ought to issue forth his sealed letters to the bailiff of Wye or his deputy, and he himself afterwards to summon in the customary manner. When these are assembled, the bailiff of Wye, or his deputy, shall receive securities for all pleas and forfeitures of the aforesaid hundred, and likewise twopence. On account of this summoning, the hundred of Wye is exempt from all custom. And it now belongs as entirely to the Abbey of Battel, as it formerly did to the king.

Now a custom[70] which had prevailed from antient times throughout England had grown into a law, namely, that earls

Hen. VIII, who, however, refounded the grammar-school connected with it, which still exists. The archbishop's application to the Abbey for the land, and for the appropriation of the vicarage, is printed in the *Monasticon*, and copied in Mr. W. S. Morris's *History of Wye*, a work containing much interesting information respecting the college and collegiate church.

[70] *Note in margin of MS.*—"Note, concerning the two pence of which our charters make mention."

should receive for themselves the third penny of the shire.[71] For this reason they were called counts (*comites*). Hence because the king had granted the whole county of Kent to his brother Odo, then bishop of Bayeux, he gave to his abbey of Battel only the two pence which he held in his own hands, the third being retained by the bishop. But subsequently, when the bishop became involved in misfortune and lost his county, this third penny escheated to the crown.

In Dengemarsh, which is a member of Wye, King William granted all the maritime customs he held there. Thus, if the fish called *Craspeis* should be cast ashore there, it belongs entirely to the abbot and monks; and if it should come to the neighbouring land within certain limits, namely, between *Horsmede* and *Withiburne*, which belongs to the soke of Wye, two parts of it, with the tongue, belong to the abbot and monks as fully as they had previously done to the king.[72] He likewise granted them the right of wreck[73] happening there.

By all this the king's interest in the welfare of Battel Abbey is clearly manifested. And as often as any royal edicts were issued to the sheriffs and justiciars of Kent, or their deputies, respecting the affairs of the Abbey, the royal letters contained an especial direction that they should preserve all the royal liberties and customs of the manor of Wye intact, that his abbey and monks of Battel might enjoy them as peaceably and undisturbedly as he himself had previously done.

He also gave them a manor in Sussex called *Alsistona*,[74]

[71] One penny out of every three of all profits arising from markets and forfeitures paid to the earl (count) of each county.

[72] The fish here alluded to was either "grandior piscis," great fish, or "crassus piscis," fat fish, or "grossus piscis," bulky fish; *vulgo*, Grampus. (*Somner Gloss.*)

[73] "Werec."

[74] Alciston, in the rape of Pevensey. The abbots had a great manor-house here, up to the time of the dissolution, when it was granted to Sir John Gage, whose lineal descendant, Viscount Gage, now possesses the estate. In the reign of Elizabeth, it was the residence of a junior branch of that distinguished family. It is now a farm-house, and exhibits several arches and other architectural features of the early English style. The parish church

with all its appendages, 43 hides and a half, which he had hitherto held in domain, with all the liberties and royal customs aforesaid. *Grant of various manors in Sussex and other counties.*

He likewise gave them, from the crown, another manor in Surrey called *Limnesfeld*,[75] with its dependencies of 25 hides, and all the liberties and royal customs above written.

Hou,[76] likewise, a manor in Essex, with all its appurtenances, he gave and confirmed to this Abbey. This was estimated at three hides and three virgates.

This most pious king, by his charter, gave and confirmed to his abbey, *Bristwoldingtun*,[77] in Berkshire, ten hides, with the aforesaid liberties and royal customs, out of his regal possessions, for his soul's health.

Craumareis,[78] also, with its five hides in Oxfordshire, he granted and gave to his said abbey of Battel, by the same royal authority. He also gave it, from his royal domain, a church in the town of Reading, with its appurtenant possessions, lands, and tithes.

By the same right, the king gave the Abbey his own church in the town of *Coluntuna*,[79] in Devonshire, with its five prebends.

There was, in the excellent city of Exeter, in the same county, a chapel of S. Olave, king and martyr, of great and antient celebrity for the miracles wrought there; this the liberal and much-to-be-commended monarch also gave, to be freely held by the Abbey, with certain land called *Sirefordia* and *Cheneberia*, and the other lands and tithes belonging to it. *Chapel of S. Olave, Exeter.*

To take possession of these gifts, the convent of the church

adjacent has traces of Norman work, and may be coeval with the grant of the manor to the Abbey. The little church of Lullington, antiently a chapel dependent upon it, is probably the smallest in England, measuring externally about twenty feet square.

[75] Limpsfield, which, like Alciston, had belonged, in the Confessor's time, to the family of the ill-fated Harold.

[76] I cannot identify this manor. It appears, however, from a subsequent passage of the Chronicle, to have been near Ongar.

[77] *Brightwaltham.* [78] *Crowmarsh.* [79] *Colhumpton.*

of Battel first sent a brother called Gunter, a man of energetic character. When he had been there a short time, and had faithfully performed his duties, he was recalled, and for his diligence in the service of God made abbot of *Torneia*.[80] The care of these churches was now intrusted to another worthy monk, with power in his very name, one Cono. He, in conjunction with a brother named Robert, as became a beloved son of the church, regardful of the future, diligently applied himself to the enrichment and elevation of the place committed to his oversight. For he not only perpetuated the rents and oblations previously accruing, but also took care to extend the fame of the relics for which the place was distinguished, as much as possible. Thus did he acquire lands and churches or tithes in and about the city of Exeter, and so, by the grace of the Thunderer, obtain the greatest favour. with his fellow-countrymen.

A cell to the Abbey founded at Exeter.

At length, when by purchase, and by the donations of the faithful, he had got possession of various houses and lands within the city, as the church of S. Olave was but small, he resolved to erect a monastery, fit for the habitation of brethren, in honour of S. Nicholas, the confessor of Christ. This he did by the license and authority of King William the Conqueror, who was still living. The narrowness of his resources could not restrain him from confidence in God, and the work so excellently commenced went forward daily. By degrees it was brought to completion, and the place being now habitable, a few brethren were brought from Battel Abbey, and divine offices began to be regularly performed. For the support of the brethren and of all that belonged to S. Olave, the abbot and convent of S. Martin of Battel allotted the church of Collumpton before mentioned (where the monks had previously dwelt), with the lands of the five prebends, namely, *Uppetona*,

[80] The editor of the Lat. ed. makes this Tournay; but the Monasticon (III, 376), with more probability, Thorney, in Cambridgeshire.

Colebroche, Hineland, Waevre, Esse, and all their appurtenances, to the church of S. Nicholas; reserving, however, as an acknowledgment of subjection, a fixed tax of sixty shillings.

Of these matters, out of the thread of our discourse, sufficient has now been said. Directing our pen to what has been omitted, this noble-minded king, regardful of the interests of his Abbey, appointed a market for the town of Battel, to be holden on the Lord's day, to be quit for ever from all exaction, and to be entirely under the management of the convent, and this he confirmed by his royal authority. *Battel market.*

Thus did this most excellent prince, this justly styled *king*, William, appoint and confirm to his Abbey of Battel, as before said, its leuga, and all its manors and possessions, to be free and quit for ever from every custom of earthly service, that is to say, from all geld, and scot, and hidage, and danegeld, and shires, and hundreds, and all pleas and plaints, and from all aids, and lestages, and essarts, and inclosures, and from all works of castles, and parks, and bridges, and military levies, with sac, and soc, and thol and theam, and infangthef, and warpeni, and hamsoken, and forestal, and blodwite, and cildwite, and latrocinium, that may happen in the Abbey's lands; and if homicide shall happen anywhere upon the land of his Abbey, within the leuga, the manors, or their members, no one ought to interfere except the abbot and his monks. He further granted, that if any treasure should be found in their lands, it should belong exclusively to them. He also gave them free-warren everywhere throughout the leuga and the manors. *Privileges of the Abbey rehearsed.*

This noble prince further commanded that the Abbey, with all its lands and possessions, should be free and secure from all domination of princes, barons, and bishops, and from the exactions of all persons whatsoever; and that its tenants should be exempt from all toll, and make all their marketings everywhere throughout the kingdom, without payment of that

impost; and that all persons molesting them on this account should incur royal forfeiture.

In addition to all this, he granted, that if any of his barons or their tenants should at any time give lands or possessions to the Abbey, it should enjoy, in respect of them, all the same liberty and royal dignity as we have before mentioned; that the servants of God, entirely quit and free, might devote themselves to Him in peace.

Donation of land at Bodiham by Osbern Fitz-Hugh.

In consequence of the dryness of the soil around Battel Abbey, and the deficiency of well-irrigated meadows, a certain knight of these parts named Osbern Fitz-Hugh, by the advice of Abbot Gausbert and the monks—with the consent of his lord, William, Earl of Eu, and the confirmation of King William—gave and granted, out of his domain, thirty acres of meadow, Norman measure, lying in his manor called *Bodeham*,[81] about seven miles distant, partly of his own free donation, for the salvation of him and his, and partly by way of sale—he receiving fifty shillings in recompense; and this by his charter he confirmed for ever to the abbey of Battel, free from all challenge or exaction of his heirs and all other persons, and from every charge whatsoever.

Of S. John's, Brecknock, by Bernard de Newmarch.

At the same time Bernard de Newmarch, one of the king's barons and a person of eminence, at the earnest solicitation of a monk of Battel, named Roger, who had for some time resided with him, freely gave to the abbey of S. Martin a certain possession in Wales, called Old Town,[82] and the church of S. John the Evangelist, contiguous to it, and lying beyond the fortifications of his castle of Brecknock, with all its appurtenances. Brother Roger (with his coadjutor Walter, another monk of Battel, and a man of great wisdom) was enabled, as a new settler,[83] by great perseverance and labour, to restore the church from its foundations. He also erected buildings for residence, and in

[81] Bodiham, on the river Rother. [82] *Vetus Villa.* [83] *Novus colonus.*

the meantime obtained from the neighbours, partly by solicitation, partly by purchase, some property in lands and tithes. And thus faithful to his charge, he laboured diligently to render to the mother church, with a large increase, the talent of the small possession which had been committed to him.

In process of time—these brethren still devoting themselves entirely to the welfare of the new establishment—Agnes, wife of Bernard previously mentioned, being sick, with her husband's consent, granted them, out of her own inheritance, a certain grange, lying out of Wales, in England, called *Berintona*,[84] as a free possession for ever. The possessions of the church were also gradually increased by Bernard's own benefactions of lands, mills, churches, and tithes; and the place was annexed, of right, to the abbey of Battel, both by the confirmation of Bernard and by royal authority.

A cell to the Abbey founded at Brecknock.

Walter being now made prior by the abbot and convent of S. Martin, it was determined that a few monks from the Abbey should reside there as servants of God, for the regular celebration of divine offices; and that in token of dependence they should pay twenty shillings of their annual income to the abbey of Battel.

William de Braose grants possessions at Bramber and Shoreham.

But to return: about the same time a very powerful baron of the king, named William de Braose, granted to the abbey of Battel eight messuages in the borough of Bramber, in the rape of the same name, in Sussex, and three others in *Sorham*,[85] and one hide of land in Sorham, to be held for ever without molestation. He also gave them annually 400 bushels of salt, and 10 bushels of wine, which the abbot of Fechamp paid him yearly for a certain land of his which he held, called *Wurmincgeherste*[86] near *Lenglentune*. In like manner he freely gave for one of his knights named Hanseline, another hide of land called *Herincgeham*.[87] At the same time

[84] Berington, co. Hereford.
[85] Shoreham.
[86] Warminghurst, near Steyning.
[87] Erringham, near Shoreham.

another of his knights named Ralph, the son of Theodore, with his consent and confirmation, gave another 400 bushels of salt to the Abbey.

Tetbert, one of the tenants of William de Braose, influenced by the example of such benevolence and piety, earnestly desired to become a monk, and devoutly dedicated himself to the Abbey. And with the assent and confirmation of his lord, he gave, with himself, the lands which he possessed, namely, one hide at *Langlentune* in *Heregrave*,[88] called Wulfrun's hide, in free and eternal possession. All these gifts Philip de Braose, son of William, confirmed in his father's presence; and the latter, in accordance with the liberties and royal dignities of Battel Abbey, granted that the burgesses whom he had given, should have full permission to buy and sell within their houses, without molestation and without toll, except on market-days, when wares were publicly exposed.

Now when the reputation of the goodness and piety of the servants of God dwelling at Battel became widely spread, and the convent became rich in consequence of the liberal benefactions of charity, it was deservedly extolled by all men. The building meanwhile went forward, and the king, its most munificent founder, had resolved soon to dedicate the establishment which he had so liberally endowed. Compelled, however, by adverse fortune, he sailed over to Normandy; and disabled by accident during the expedition, he came at length to Rouen. His sickness daily increased, and when he perceived that his end drew near, he was not unmindful of the Abbey he had reared in England, but took care to command his son William, whom he had constituted his successor to the kingdom, that, upon his return to this country to receive the crown, he should endow the convent with one manor of forty pounds, over and above what he himself had freely conferred upon it. He gave, moreover, his royal pallium, beautifully ornamented with gold

Death and burial of William I.

[88] I cannot identify these localities.

and very costly gems, and 300 amulets suitably fabricated of gold and silver, many of which were attached to chains of those metals, and contained innumerable relics of the saints; with a feretory in the form of an altar, in which also were many relics, and upon which, in his expedition, mass had been accustomed to be celebrated. These things, among many others acquired by the kings his predecessors, he had obtained with the kingdom;[89] and they had hitherto been preserved in the royal treasury, until now that he ordered them to be presented to the Abbey. He also gave orders for the speedy dedication of the Abbey with suitable honour. He (Rufus) obeyed these behests, and the sickness of the most excellent monarch increased, until at length, alas! on the 5th of the ides of September, in the 21st year of his reign, he expired. His earthly body was conveyed to Caen, to the church of S. Stephen, which he had founded, and there committed to the earth before the altar. The Holy Redeemer grant his spirit an everlasting kingdom!

To dwell a little upon this event, we know not what words can unfold the rise of this miserable life when the bewailed fall of such royal magnificence is considered. Who can fail to lament the painful fate of this every-way glorious king, whose greatest study was to honour God and to exalt his temples,[90] and by his observance of the laws, to seek not so much the

[89] "Quae inter alia multiformia ex predecessorum suorum *regum* cum *regno* adquisitione obtinuerat." There is evidently an error here. If William did not get possession of these relics until he became king, how could he have used the feretory which enclosed them by way of altar during his expedition? We know that the Normans were much greater relic-mongers than the English; and these articles had doubtless descended to him from his Norman predecessors. Assuming this as probable, the relics must have been the same with those which William had, in 1065, surreptitiously introduced under the portable altar upon which he had compelled Harold to take a solemn oath not to oppose him in his designs upon England. In the Bayeux Tapestry, where this scene is represented, Harold is placing his right hand upon an altar in the form of a feretory, with a superaltare; and this is doubtless the identical object which William in the following year brought over to England, and which, according to our chronicler, he now presented to the Abbey of Battel.

[90] "*Basilicas* extollere." The term basilica is several times employed to designate Battel Abbey.

name of a king as the equity of a ruler! Before his exertions, the haughty fierceness of the Normans gave way, the barbarous rudeness of the English was overcome, and the mad arrogance of many kingdoms succumbed; but although he subdued all these by the guidance of reason, yet the relentless cruelty of death—procured, alas! by an apple—shrank not from making him its victim! O doleful lot of our miserable condition, since one who was accompanied by greatness of soul in difficult enterprise, by strength and success in acquisition, and by sagacity in reducing to order what he had acquired, was subdued, like one destitute of all these qualifications, by universal and deadly fate, which as certainly invades the illustrious king as it does the meanest of mankind. But as it is not enough to mourn over our miserable condition, while I withdraw my pen from these considerations, let the wise man be warned to secure for himself an everlasting asylum.

Let us now hasten briefly to recall to memory some things which we have omitted of the notable deeds of this glorious William, who was both in name and in reality a King.

This most noble prince founded three abbacies from his own estate, with competent lands attached to each, to say nothing of the innumerable possessions and benefices which, regarding his soul's prosperity, he gave, and permitted others to give, to various monasteries of the saints, both on this side the sea and beyond it. Two convents he built at Caen—one for monks, magnificent and wealthy, for himself, in which, as we have said, he was buried; and another for nuns, sufficiently notable, for the sake and at the instance of his queen Matilda, in which she lies honourably entombed. The third, which is the subject of our present narration, he founded in England, at the place where God had favoured him with victory. And here, without doubt, it was his intention, had he died in England, to have been interred. But as he did not live to see it dedicated, he endowed it, alas! much less richly than he

had intended; for while it was yet incomplete, he had determined to make it, for greatness and wealth, one of the principal monasteries of England. Death, however, as we have seen, prevented this. From this circumstance let the wise man be admonished to do the good work he has proposed while he can, namely, to-day, since he knows not whether the morrow shall be granted him. It is wiser to avail ourselves of the present for a good deed, than to defer it to uncertainties; for we can rejoice more securely in praiseworthy deeds already performed, than in those which we have merely proposed, and which we know not whether we shall be able to accomplish. For it happens to some, that when with power to do good they defer its execution, the just judgment of God overtakes them for that sin (and every one is permitted to do that which is not expedient), and afterwards they want both the will and the opportunity. Still, however, as a good intention cannot be too much esteemed, this glorious monarch's liberal designs deserve the highest commendation; for laying the foundations of the abbey with a bountiful hand, he conferred so many gifts upon it, that if they be but well dispensed, they will prove sufficient for the inhabitants in all time to come. And although his unexpected decease must ever be a subject of regret for his Abbey, whose loss is not merely disadvantageous, but irreparable—a thing of which it is impossible to speak without lamentation—still, by the superintending providence of God over his servants, it has been sustained amidst all the vicissitudes of this world, by his authority and the liberality of his gifts; and thus far, through divine grace, it is defended and carried forward by the good-will of his heirs. But let us now apply ourselves to matters subsequent.

As soon as the mournful intelligence of the king's decease reached this country, William his son, an illustrious man of martial character, in compliance with his father's injunction, came over to England to assume the government. Being well received by all, he was crowned at London by Archbishop

Lanfranc. The ceremony took place in the presence of the nobles of the kingdom, on Christmas-day, at the commencement of the year of the incarnation of the Word of God 1088.[91]

Rufus sends his father's gifts to Battel,

The new king was not unmindful of his father's commands, but soon after sent to the Abbey of S. Martin his royal pallium, and the feretory of which we have spoken, with the 300 amulets resplendent with the excellence of holy relics. All these things were received at Battel on the 8th of the calends of November.

and further endows the Abbey with Bromham.

He also gave the Abbey, from his royal crown, his manor of *Bromham*, in Wiltshire, worth forty pounds, for ever, with all its members, and provided that both it and the Abbey of Battel, with all its appendages, should remain exempt from all exactions and customs of earthly service, in accordance with the charters of his father previously spoken of; and confirmed it by his own charter.

The venerable abbot Gausbert, carefully watching over his flock, unceasingly set before his charge, both by word and deed, a pattern of perfection as to piety, charity, and the exercise of every virtue, and thus greatly advanced the interests of the Abbey. And at the long-desired completion of the edifice, the king's affairs led him, in company with many of his nobles, into this county; when, at the instance of the abbot, and in compliance with his father's injunction, he resolved to dedicate the Abbey.

The Abbey dedicated.

On the appointed day he came to this place, with an innumerable train of his barons and of the common people. Hither also came the most reverend and beloved of God, Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury, and with the king were these venerable bishops, namely, Walkelin of Winchester, Ralph of Chichester, Osmund of Salisbury, John of Bath, William of Durham, Roger of Coutances, and Gundulf of Rochester, with a great concourse of the clergy and people, whom he caused to dedicate the Abbey with great

[91] An error. Rufus was crowned 26th Sept. 1087. (*Sax. Chr.*)

pomp to the honour of the holy and undivided Trinity, the blessed Mary, ever virgin, and Christ's confessor, S. Martin. This ceremonial took place on the third of the ides of February, in the year of the incarnate Word of God 1095, and the eighth of his reign.[92]

Rufus grants many churches to Battel.

This magnificent prince, moreover, conferred upon the Abbey, out of his domain, certain churches in Suffolk, Norfolk, and Essex, within the dioceses of London and Norwich. In Essex, which is in the diocese of London, he gave the church of *Sanford*,[93] entirely free and quit, with full tithes and the appurtenant land. In Suffolk and Norfolk, in the bishopric of Norwich, he gave the church of *Exelinges*,[94] the church of *Trilawe*,[95] the church of *Middlehala*,[96] the church of *Nortuna*,[97] the church of *Brantham*,[98] with the chapels of *Bercholt*,[99] and *Selfelege*,[100] and *Benetlege*,[101] and *Scotlege*,[102] the church of *Mendlesham*,[103] with *Andreeston*,[104] the church of *Brandford*,[105] with *Burstale*,[106] and *Æilbrichestoton*,[107] the church of *Eilesham*,[108] with its chapels, *Stevechaia*,[109] with two parts of tithe, and *Scipdene*,[110] with two parts of tithe, and *Brundele*[111] likewise, and *Banningeham*[112] likewise, with a moiety of the church of *Inguwerthe*;[113] and with the fee that Brithtric the priest held, namely, the land of one Socheman, in the same manor of Eilesham, to hold them as freely as all its other lands. Likewise the above-mentioned chapels of the church of Brantham have two parts of the tithe from the lord's domain.

All these churches, with the lands, tithes, possessions, and

[92] "Then at Candlemas the king went to Hastings, and whilst he waited there for a fair wind, he caused the *Monastery on the Field of Battle* to be consecrated."—(*Saxon Chronicle*, A. D. 1094.)

[93] Samford?
[94] Exning.
[95] Trimley St. Martin?
[96] Mildenhall.
[97] Norton.
[98] Still so called.
[99] Bergholt.
[100] (?)
[101] Bentley.
[102] (?)
[103] Still bears the same name.
[104] Andrew, St.?
[105] Bramford.
[106] Burston?
[107] (?)
[108] Aylsham.
[109] Stiffkey.
[110] (?)
[111] Brundall.
[112] Banningham.
[113] Ingworth.

tenants belonging to them, the king granted and gave to the abbey of Battel, free and quit of all exaction and custom, and directed that the clergy who then held them should pay to the Abbey a fixed annual charge, and that at their death the abbot and monks should dispose of the churches as seemed most to their advantage.

These things were settled by royal charter, and confirmed by the authority of all the bishops present, who forbade the interference of any one thereupon, on pain of excommunication.

An indulgence to pilgrims. Everything being thus satisfactorily concluded, thirty days of pardon were granted, by the common consent of the bishops, to all penitents who should attend the anniversary of the dedication; and a suitable banquet having been prepared for all, as an oblation of charity, they joyfully departed. And the king so greatly loved, cherished, and defended the Abbey, and so maintained its dignities and royal customs, that, as in his father's time no one had dared to injure it, so he himself, as often as he happened to be in these parts, was accustomed, in the abundance of his affection, frequently to revisit, to cherish, and to console it.

Matters were in this condition, when the venerable abbot Gausbert—who, as an unmarried man,[114] adorned with every virtue, had strengthened to perfection the foundations for sanctity laid in this place, and happily governed the Abbey almost twenty years—in the very year of the dedication, was brought by infirmity to his end. On the 6th of the calends of August he departed this life, amidst his band of disciples whom he had instructed in the excellency of religion, and yielded up his spirit to its Giver, to receive a hundredfold for his pious deeds. All the brethren, with the deepest grief and lamentation at this dire calamity, buried the body of their venerated father within the church before the rood.

Death of abbot Gausbert, July 27, 1095.

This personage, after he had built the [abbey] church of

[114] *Ut vir cœlebs.*

Battel, in the lifetime of the glorious king William, taking what was necessary for that purpose from the royal treasury, constructed as many offices[115] as were necessary for the brethren. In this he did not study ostentation, in the way of fine buildings, as many are apt to do; for, being of a lowly mind, he was content with humble things; for he considered himself to have in this world no enduring habitation, but rather sought one to come, in heaven; which after a long course of faithful warfare, like a worthy soldier of Christ, he departed out of this life, as we have said, to receive from Him.

The monastery of Battel being thus deprived of its first father, and unable to subsist without the governance of an abbot, the brethren repaired to king William (son of the great prince of that name), informed him of the death of their abbot, reminded him that it was his prerogative to elect another, and earnestly desired him to supply them with a pastor out of the convent, according to the directions of the canons. And although the king's reply was quite in accordance with their wish, yet some delays arose, in consequence of the royal authority and due reverence for the church being set at nought; for an envious conspiracy disturbed the king's mind, and the multiplicity of his affairs prevented the fulfilment of his engagement. After a time, however, the king, yielding to his flatterers, and urged by the advice of the most reverend Anselm, the archbishop, appointed Henry, prior of Christ Church, Canterbury—a man renowned, indeed, for piety, benevolence, and gentleness, and for every virtue of morality and learning—abbot of the monastery. In this affair force prevailed over reason and justice, and became a source of no little calamity to the Abbey.

Election of abbot Henry, June 11, 1096.

In the year of the incarnate Word of God 1096, therefore, Lord Henry, being elected abbot, was honourably received at Battel Abbey, on the 3d of the ides of June. Asserting his abbatial privileges,

[115] *Aedificia officinarum.*

he sent to Canterbury for a number of the monks of that establishment, to whose will and counsel he had completely surrendered his own judgment, and detained them with him. And although he was in his nature a good man, it was impossible not to differ with him, inasmuch as he did not sufficiently resist the evil designs of others. Hence it was that Ralph, bishop of Chichester (earnestly labouring by some of his emissaries), availed himself of the opportunity of annoyance which presented itself, by refusing to consecrate him in Battel Abbey, and thus wearied him a long time by his delay.

The claims of the bishop renewed.

The wavering abbot, after a feeble struggle, yielded at length to the persuasions of some of his creatures, and the advice of Archbishop Anselm, in spite of the opposition of the monks of Battel, and, in contravention of the rights of his Abbey, inconsiderately went to Chichester for consecration. This gave birth to continual intestine dissensions; and other disputes succeeding, the affairs of the Abbey were administered without either the prudence or the prosperity becoming the house of God. Still, however, being invested with this high honour, though he connived at many improprieties for a time, yet eventually, by dint of the greatest exertion, he bravely steered the bark committed to his charge amidst the rocks and billows which surrounded her. As an unmarried man,[116] illustrious in the fear of God, he appropriately honoured the choir-service with instrumental music,[117] and enriched the church with some ornaments and furniture.

Story of the vestment sacrilegiously obtained from the Abbey by a monk of Fly.

Affairs were in this posture, and the Abbey was thus exposed to the craft of its enemies, when it happened that as king William was engaged in the concerns of Normandy, among the many suppliants of his bounty, there came to him the abbot of the monastery of Flagi (where S. Jeremarus, illustrious for his

[116] *Ut vir cælebs.*

[117] *Servitium cantuum ornatu dulcisono.*

virtues, is reported to be enshrined).[117] This man anxiously solicited from the king for his church a costly vestment called a *casula*, or, if he had not one prepared, a sufficient sum of money for the purchase of one. But the king put him off till he should return to England. After his return, one of the monks of that abbey assiduously reminded him of his promise, and, at length, the king, who was upon an expedition into Wales, wearied out with his importunity and urged by the advice of others, dispatched him to the Abbey of S. Martin of Battel, whence we are now writing,[118] with a precept, sealed with the royal seal, demanding, without delay, ten pounds of silver of English money for this purpose.

Abbot Henry, upon receipt of the order, to which he could by no means assent, privately dispatched two of the brethren to the king, that they might urge upon him the great poverty of the Abbey, and request him to desist from so objectionable a demand, lest a custom should spring from this precedent.

But the king, in nowise softened by expostulation, threateningly ordered the full sum to be paid to the foreign monk.[119] The troublesome monk, moreover, urgently prosecuting his demand, the abbot, compelled by poverty, yet not without heavy lamentations, collected from the sacred amulets of saintly relics previously mentioned, a sufficient quantity of silver to satisfy this most vexatious extortioner.

Having gladly received this, he set about to purchase purple suitable for the work, and, regardless of the unholy means by which it had been procured, joyfully conveyed it to his abbey.

[117] S. Jeremarus. or S. Germer, who flourished in the seventh century, founded a monastery at Pentale, a rock at the mouth of the Seine, which, in 655, he transported to the marshes of *Fly*, a league distant from Gournay, and dedicated to the Holy Trinity, S. Mary, S. John, and S. Peter. He died three years afterwards, and the abbey, in a new dedication, received his own name. Up to its dissolution in 1789, it counted a succession of no less than fifty-five abbots. The Sires de Gournay were its chief benefactors. The magnificent conventual church still exists. (*Vide Gurney's Records of the House of Gournay.*)

[118] *Unde nunc nostra desudat Minerva* (!)

[119] This is very inconsistent with the statement at page 46.

So the vestment was forthwith made, and no apprehension of God's judgments being entertained, all things appeared to have been satisfactorily performed; but suddenly, at a certain time, about the third hour of the day, the Lord thundered from the heavens, and the wonted calmness of the air was changed into a thick darkness, and as it were the shadow of death; and there arose a mighty tempest of lightning and thunder. As we have said, the third hour of the day had commenced, and the brethren were chanting the verse, "Sharp arrows of the mighty,"[120] when on a sudden the day assumed the horror of dark night, and the trembling earth, shaken by the crashing of the heavens, seemed to rise beneath their feet. All the brethren, fearing the lightning-stroke from heaven, desisted from the occupation in which they were engaged, and prostrated themselves in prayer—and lo! in a short space, two of the monks were deprived of their vital breath!

Though all were greatly amazed, they lost sight of the *cause* of this direful visitation. But the Lord, the righteous Judge, was not slack to manifest his vengeance for the spoiling of his beloved Martin, and the tokens of the saints preserved in his temple; for the next year the visitation was renewed in the following manner. The vestment of which we speak was lying carefully folded up in a linen cloth between two of the principal vestments of the abbey, when the stroke of a thunderbolt, brandished from heaven, pierced it, and although the linen cloth and the vestments above and beneath escaped all injury, this *casula* had wonderful holes made in it by the fiery force of the lightning: and thus was the cause of so great a calamity manifestly shown.

Hence we may see the marvellous power of God towards his saints—for, like the Babylonish furnace which burnt only the bands of the just, so the fire took effect only upon this

[120] "What shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue? *Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper.*" (Psalm cxx, v. 3 and 4.)

vestment, which it showed to have been unrighteously obtained from the spoils of the saints.

We trust that no one will take offence that we have given a somewhat different account from that of a certain person who has before us ably written concerning this vestment, inasmuch as we have learned these particulars from those who were present as eye-witnesses, and mainly from the exactor of the money, the monk Richard himself, who, happening to come hither with his abbot, Odo of Flagi, solicited forgiveness for himself and his convent, before the lord abbot Warner and a full chapter of the Abbey of Battel, and the abbot himself avouched it, calling upon the name of God. And what was then related we have recorded in words of truth.

Death of Rufus, and accession of Henry I.

But to return; when the military reputation and power of King William, the son of the *great* King William, were everywhere increasing, he happened to be engaged a-hunting in a certain forest which he had established, and which he would have called the New Forest. Here, as he was eagerly pursuing his sport —in the mysterious dispensation of God, by an accident which cannot be accounted for—he was wounded by a certain knight with an arrow, and on the 4th of the nones of August, in the thirteenth year of his reign, in the year of the Divine Incarnation 1100, he departed this life.

When King William was thus deprived of his life and kingdom, great commotions arose in the country, in consequence of some of the nobility having yielded themselves to factious dissensions. But in the providence of God, Henry, the brother of the deceased king, coming over, caused his body to be honourably conveyed[121] to Winchester for interment. And a few days subsequently, Henry, by the Divine appointment, obtaining the sceptre of the English monarchy,

[121] This is altogether at variance with the account given by William of Malmesbury, who says: "A few countrymen conveyed the body, placed in a cart, to the cathedral at Winchester, the blood dripping from it all the way." (*Giles's Translation*, p. 346.)

was invested with the royal crown, on the anniversary of the blessed Oswald, king and martyr, at Westminster, on the nones of August, in the presence of some of the chief men of the realm. Having acquired this dignity, he bestirred himself, like a man of consummate prudence and mindful of the general good, by every means in his power to tranquillise the kingdom; and fortune favoured his wishes. He was, both in nature and disposition, a worthy heir of the great King William, defending the Abbey of Battel as the pledge of his royal crown, fortifying it with charters, and exalting it to the utmost of his ability.

Death of Abbot Henry, June 18, 1102.

Now Abbot Henry, after he had sustained his office for six years and seven days, was brought by sickness to his end. He died on the 14th of the calends of July, in the year of the Incarnate Word which was in the beginning 1102, and was buried by the brethren in the chapter-house of the Abbey of Battel, in a place which he himself had chosen, before the seat of the president.

As soon as the news was conveyed to the king's court, a certain clerk was immediately dispatched to the Abbey to manage its affairs; and afterwards another, one of the king's chaplains, named Vivian, was delegated to the care of the establishment. And when he had passed a very short time there, the king conferred the government of the abbacy upon a certain monk of S. Carileff, called Gausfrid, a man unskilled, indeed, in learning, but excelling in sagacity, prudence, and habits of business. Coming honourably hither on the 11th of the calends of August, he found the house on all sides destitute; but laying as it were the foundation of things, both domestic and external, anew, he soon manifested the wisdom for which he was remarkable. Under him, in a short time, the *promptuaria* of procurations,[122]

Gausfrid appointed custos.

[122] Procuratio is defined as "hospitality; entertainment or provision given to an ordinary at his institution." A "promptuarium" generally signifies a storehouse or larder; but of its precise meaning in this passage I am ignorant.

and the rights of the Abbey and the brethren, were restored, honour recovered itself, and the wealth of the manors was increased.

Peculations of the Bailiff of Wye.

And when he had come to the head manor of the church of Wye, which had been managed by a servant of the deceased abbot, named Robert de Chilton, he found everything in disorder. He soon, therefore, began to ascertain the causes, and to demand of the bailiff himself an account of his stewardship. Robert declared that he had always given his late lord satisfaction, and that as *he* had been content, there was no need of witnesses now. At length he convened an assembly at the court of the manor, and relying upon the nobles of that province, stoutly refused to do justice; whereupon the procurator summoned him and his friends present, in the king's name, to attend on a certain day at the court of the Abbey of Battel. And after much disputation to no purpose, they went their way.

On the appointed day, the parties concerned, namely, Fulbert de Chilham, Robert Fillel, Hamo the son of Vital, Brother the priest, and many other barons, with the said Robert, constrained by terror of the king's authority, came to the court of Battel. And as it was near nightfall when they arrived, Master Gausfrid was persuaded, though rather against his will, to postpone the pleadings till the first day of Advent.[123] Gausfrid had a practice worthy of notice, namely, in transacting any business which might concern the interests of posterity, he took care that not only the senior brethren should be present, but the juniors also; and the rules of their order prevented that being done at so late an hour.

After hospitable entertainment, therefore, the court assembled, and Gausfrid, surrounded by the brethren, addressed those who had been summoned thus:—"Since, my dearest fathers, you have obeyed our orders to attend this court, I wish to know whether you are prepared to do and to receive

[123] "In primum Dominici adventus diem.

justice." But they insisted that they ought to do what was necessary, not there, but in their own county; whereupon, after much controversy, Master Gausfrid said, "If, then, as you assert, you will not submit to justice except in your own county, the question arises whether you would not object to a settlement of these complaints if you were summoned to the royal court itself?" "By no means!" was their reply. "Then," said he, "you cannot resist the present court, since, indeed, it is the king's." Upon this they angrily attempted to break out of the court by force; but he ordered the doors of the Abbey to be locked, and declared that unless they paid due respect to that royal court, he would report every one of them to the king.

So when they had reconsidered the boldness of this man, and the justice of the royal interference, they began to tremble for the consequences, and professed themselves willing to do and to receive what was right at once. Then Master Gausfrid proceeded to prove the waste which had been made of the manor of Wye, and the inability of the bailiff to give an account of his stewardship; and at length, after a very wordy discussion, Robert was adjudged guilty. He thereupon acknowledged himself wrong, and sued for pardon, which was mercifully granted, upon his paying a fine of ten pounds of silver and ten bushels of corn. This being settled, Gausfrid demanded if those present had any complaint to make against him, and no one bringing forward any charge, the court broke up. Gausfrid now committed that manor, and all other things connected with the Abbey with which he had been intrusted, to faithful men, for reformation, while he himself carefully superintending the interests of the servants of God, turned his attention to the building and fortification of the house, and to the construction of walls about the outer inclosure.

About this time there happened a wreck in Dengemarsh, a member of Wye. A ship laden with royal ornaments and

works,[124] and much shattered by the waves, was cast ashore at that place; and as it could not be repaired within the time allotted by custom, the king's collectors came to seize the vessel with its treasures for the crown. This Master Gausfrid and his men opposed, upon which a complaint was laid before the king. But he, willing to observe the custom of the country, and cautious of doing anything that might injure his Abbey, waived his own claims, and commanded the shipwrecked commodities to be given up to the Abbey. Master Gausfrid, therefore, disposed of them as he thought best, giving the royal vestments to the servants, while he applied the rest of the cargo to the use of the Abbey.

A wreck in Dengemarsh.

King Henry's fame for virtue and magnificence being by this time widely spread, among many others who came from foreign parts to his court at Winchester, at the Easter after his coronation, was the venerable William, abbot of Marmoutier, whose principal object was to subjugate the Abbey of Battel to his own authority. Meeting with a gracious reception from the king, he took care, through his agents, after the solemnities were over, to make the monarch acquainted with the object of his visit. The king was much disposed to yield to his wishes, not only from motives of personal respect, but because he had voluntarily come to court from so great a distance. Still, without due counsel, he would do nothing in the matter.

The abbot of Marmoutier makes another attempt.

Among the other great men of the realm then at court was the before-mentioned Gausfrid, the procurator of Battel Abbey, who was not excluded from the secrets of the palace. As soon as he heard of this design, he was on the alert, and took care, both in his own person and through the interference of friends, to endeavour to withdraw the mind of the king from such a purpose.

Now when the king had received the abbot's communication, declaring that King William, his father, had given the

[124] "Regiis ornamentis et operibus onustam."

Abbey of Battel, from the time of its very foundation, in subjection to Marmoutier, the king's counsellors very properly required him to produce deeds of confirmation. To this the abbot replied, that the donation of so great a man, conferred by word of mouth, was sufficient without a witness, and that hitherto he had never sought any kind of deed, because he did not deem it necessary. To which it was answered, that the donation of so important a thing—endowed as it was with eminent privileges, and standing as an evidence of the royal crown—could not be confirmed unless the gift were proved by charters, or at least by the oral testimony of witnesses. Thus was the importunity of this exactor brought to an end, and all hope of gaining his purpose excluded. The king, however, would not suffer so distinguished a personage to have a fruitless journey to his court; for in the first place he offered to appoint any one of his monks (freed from all allegiance to Marmoutier) abbot of Battel, on condition that all claim of subjection should thenceforward cease. And since he had made the refusal in vindication of the freedom of his Abbey of Battel, in order that all challenge of Marmoutier should be for ever silenced, and that it should remain as if it were his own royal chapel, his kingly magnificence conferred on Marmoutier a certain manor in Devonshire, called *Torvertune*, and the church of the manor of *Chosham*, in Wiltshire; and thus was the suit of this man brought to an end. Things being thus arranged by royal authority, in conformity with the wishes of Gausfrid, he returned home, and joyfully narrated them to the brethren; and thenceforth, as he had previously done, he ever manfully defended the interests of God's house.

Gausfrid dies May 16th.

When the vigilant Master Gausfrid had, by dint of good management, restored the desolate house, ere the third year of his oversight was completed, he was removed hence, alas! too soon, and yielding to the law of nature, departed this life on the 17th of the calends of June. His body, which was interred amidst the greatest

lamentations of the brethren, rests in the chapter-house, near that of Abbot Henry, towards the left.

The Abbey of Battel being thus deprived of so wise a manager, in whom had flourished the true affection of a father, the Lord Gunter, abbot of Thorney, of whom we have before spoken, came by the king's consent to take charge of the abbacy; and the management of the house being delegated to his agents, he returned to his own abbey, leaving behind him, for a time, his nephew Ralph. But he was afterwards deprived of his authority by the abbot, in consequence of some intrigues,[125] and the king being much occupied with his own affairs, the management devolved entirely upon the monks themselves, who diligently exercised it for some time.

But in the year of the Divine Incarnation 1107, King Henry called a general council, and, in appointing pastors to many destitute churches, was not unmindful, among the rest, of his own chapel of Battel. Therefore, by the advice of his friends, he sent for a certain monk of Caen, renowned for his piety and prudence, Ralph by name (who had come over to England with Lanfranc the archbishop, and was then associated with the venerable Bishop Gundulph, and ably governed the priory of Rochester), and appointed him abbot of this church. Having been elected on the day of S. Peter[126] *ad vincula*, he was received at Battel with becoming honour, at the feast of S. Lawrence,[127] and began at once, with the piety which ever actuated him, to watch over the internal and external affairs of the Abbey with great prudence.

Abbot Ralph appointed 1107.

Under the administration of this venerable man, the Abbey attained such a pitch of honour, by his providence, by the faithful care of the brethren, and by the display of hospitality to all without needless delay, that it became second to none of the monasteries of England in regard of religion, bounty, clemency, charity, and the reputation of humanity. In his praise spake every servant of the faith, and the inconstant

[125] *Quibusdam simultatibus.* [126] August 1. [127] August 10.

tongues of the multitude shouted aloud, while envy (if by any chance it sprang up against him) was fain to succumb with a groan. For there was such an abundance of all good things, and such great attention paid to hospitality, that guests and strangers came not so much like passing visitors, as to remain a longer time at their pleasure, as if they had come to their own homes. Neither did any poverty restrain this bounty, since He who causeth the liberal soul to abound, so disposed affairs, that there was a sufficiency to defray the cost.

In those days, when, by the care of our lord King Henry (who, as a kind of external abbot, cherished and governed the Abbey of Battel with paternal love) and by the attention of Abbot Ralph to religion and doctrine within the Abbey, the place daily increased with much tranquillity and peace, and with abundance of wealth—the abbot with his brethren began, among other politic measures, to buy up lands, and also, by pleas and quests, to recover others that had been lost or unjustly withdrawn, or usurped, in the several manors of the Abbey, that they might thus augment the possessions of the house. Among these they bought three wists of land from one Ingelram, a tenant of Withlard de Bailol, which he held at *Bernhorne*,[128] for the sum of 57 shillings. This the same Withlard conceded and confirmed, with the tithe of all the revenue of his land at *Boccholt*,[129] which Ingelram gave to the Abbey. He likewise gave to the monks of S. Martin, from his own possessions, the land which is called *S. Martin's Marsh* to this day.

Further donations to the Abbey.

Another of their neighbours, called Gerald de Normanville, granted to S. Martin of Battel, the land of *Glesham*, the monks paying him twenty marks of silver.

[128] *Barnhorn*, in the parish of Bexhill. In the Valor Eccl. of Henry VIII, the farm of this manor is valued at £27. 12*s*. 10½*d*.

[129] *Buckholt*, also in Bexhill. "Bocholt" is an Anglo-Saxon word, signifying a grove of beech-trees.

At the same time one Wening, a neighbour, gave to the Abbey a certain church in the vicinity called *Westfelde*,[130] with one wist of land and the ORDEAL BY WATER [131] thereto pertaining, with all its customs for ever. This also his lord, William Fitz-Wibert, conceded, and added besides the tithe of his revenues of *Bocstepe*, exempt from every claim. And at his death he gave a portion of his land at *Bocestepe*, worth ten shillings, to the Abbey.[132]

At that time also the monks purchased, for eleven marks of silver, a land adjacent to the leuga, which is often called *Dudilande* and *Bregeselle*,[133] from a certain knight named Anselm de Fraelvilla; all claims of his heirs being removed for ever. The same Anselm likewise offered, for the souls of him and his, a certain land, for the purpose of making salt-pits, and one acre of meadow, and the whole tithe of his vill called *Glesi*. All these gifts Roger, his son, agreed to, on condition of receiving a dog which he demanded.

Likewise, in those days, at the earnest desire of a certain nobleman of this district, William Saint Leger,[134] the monks of this place, with Ralph their abbot, made an arrangement, by which he granted to them in hereditary right his land called *Prunhelle*,[135] which lies beyond Winchelsea, hard by the Abbey's own manor of Dengemarsh, on condition of their paying one moiety of the rent of 23 shillings at the feast of

[130] *Westfield*, near Battel, not in Berkshire, as the editor of the Latin edition supposes.

[131] Much has been written on the subject of ordeals, as practised by our Saxon forefathers. See particularly *Archæologia*, vol. xxxii, p. 263. "Spelmann gives instances of the right of ordeal by water being conferred upon monasteries by the kings of England, but the fact of its being attached to the manor of a subject is strange, nor can I (says the editor of the Latin copy) find any other instances." The last vestige of this superstitious practice existed not many generations ago, in the "swimming of witches."

[132] *Bucksteep*, in the parish of Warbleton. Here, in antient times, was a chapel, probably erected by one of the abbots.

[133] *Dudilande* has lost its name: *Bregeselle* is now Bredshill or Bridgehill. It comprises part of Crowhurst Park, and some adjacent lands. Mr. Vidler thinks that some of the descendants of de Fraelville changed their patronymic to "de Bregeselle."

[134] The family of St. Leger (de S. Leodegario) came from Caen, and temp. Hen. I were lords of Dallington and Wartling, near Battel.

[135] *Promhill*, in Romney Marsh.

S. John the Baptist, and another at that of S. Andrew the Apostol. For this surrender, Abbot Ralph gave him a horse worth two marks, and forgave him eight shillings and sixpence, which he owed him, that the Abbey might freely hold the land in perpetuity without challenge. One of his heirs, named Clarenbald, subsequently forgave the Abbey twelve pence of the rent in alms; and, at a still later period, two shillings more were remitted, in the same manner, for Clarenbald's soul, so that thenceforward only 10 shillings should be paid to his heirs at the feast of S. John and 10 shillings at that of S. Andrew, at the court of Battel; all challenge being thus removed.

A certain neighbour, Osbern, the son of Isilia, granted to the Abbey of Battel two salt-pits,[136] and land to make a third, at Rye, for his own soul, and for the souls of his ancestors, both living and dead.

Emma, wife of Osbern de Bodiham, gave to the Abbey land worth six shillings, within the manor of Bodiham, and a mill called Sansei, near Criuil, in Normandy,—Robert, Earl of Eu, her lord, confirming the gift,—in the presence of many witnesses.

An exchange of lands with King Henry.

Now at this time, that monarch of singular excellence, King Henry, determined to found a monastery, for the remission of his own sins, as well as for the souls of his father, mother, and wife, and of all his heirs, and requiring a suitable place for that purpose, at length found one to his liking at Reading. But as the church of that district, with all its appendages, had been given, as before stated, by the great King William, to the Abbey of S. Martin of Battel, King Henry, entertaining a very high regard for this monastery, gave in exchange a certain manor called *Fundintune*,[137] and taking Reading entirely into

[136] "Duas salinas." The Sussex coast was remarkable for the number of its salt-pans or salt-pits; many of them are mentioned in Domesday Book.

[137] *Funtington*, in West Sussex.

his own hands, liberally founded there a large and handsome temple in honour of the blessed Mother of Mercy.

But the abbot and brethren of Battel, finding that the place conferred upon them by the king was of little use to them, made complaint to him to that effect; whereupon the king gave them another manor called *Apeldreham*,[138] lying one mile from the city of Chichester. This he confirmed by his charter, wholly free and quit of all earthly service, like the other possessions of the Abbey, into the hands of the servants of God. Moreover this magnificent monarch, cherishing a great affection for the Abbey, about the same time, freely and of his own proper gift, conferred upon it a certain church, dedicated to S. Peter the Apostol, in the city of *Chærmerdi*,[139] in Wales, with all its appendages, for ever.

The king grants a church at Caermarthen.

He also gave to the Abbey another church, founded there in very early times, in honour of S. Theodore the Martyr. To this he added a detached estate in the neighbourhood, called *Pentewi*, a desirable acquisition, inasmuch as it abounded with the best corn. He also adorned the Abbey of Battel and its appurtenances with many things, which still remain.

Now (as we have long ago said) all Christian offices for the parishioners of the town of Battel had of old, from the first, been celebrated in the church of S. Martin; and because out of this practice there had arisen to the monks certain causes of inquietude, which they were unable to suffer without a breach of order, they had by common consent erected, beyond the circuit of the walls, a chapel in honour of the blessed Mother of God, in which a priest might, under the direction of the abbot or the brethren, serve the parishioners. But although the monastery of S. Martin enjoyed every dignity and privilege of freedom, yet the

Parish church of Battel exempted from the bishop's jurisdiction.

[138] *Appledram.* [139] *Cærmarthen.*

servants of the bishop (of Chichester) sought every opportunity of raising pretences and complaints, and, by withdrawing oil, chrism, and other things pertaining to Christian ordinances, and such like practices, endeavoured by vexatious delay to bring the place into subjection.

On a consideration of these circumstances, Abbot Ralph, conferring with his friends, judged it desirable to go to the venerable Bishop Ralph of Chichester, who had always manifested a regard for this place, in order to be released from this cause of complaint. A council having, therefore, been summoned, the abbot, with certain of his monks, went to Chichester, and the matter being sifted before a full chapter of that church, it was confirmed by the bishop, with the consent of all, that even as the Abbey of S. Martin of Battel, so in like manner the chapel of S. Mary of that town, should be for ever free from all episcopal customs and forfeitures, and from the pennies of oil, and from synodal;—that the priest of that chapel should attend the synod, only that he might hear episcopal commands, though he should not there suffer judgment for any fault, and that he should by no means attend a chapter of the clergy without the command or licence of the abbot;—that if the priest should happen to fall into any gross crime, the chapel should not on that account be vacant, but that another should supply his place at the abbot's appointment; and that the confession and penance of the offending priest should be in the hands of the bishop, but the forfeiture in those of S. Martin. It was further confirmed that the abbot should not be summoned or enforced to attend any synod, as above stated.

The monks present a Book to the church of Chichester.

All these things being conceded by the whole chapter of Chichester, and confirmed by the bishop's authority, the abbot and monks of Battel, in acknowledgment of the transaction, gave to the church of Chichester a certain book of the Epistles of S. Jerome, in the presence of many witnesses.

Nor did this alone satisfy the venerable Bishop Ralph, now that he was upon such excellent terms with the abbey; therefore, with a view to manifest his regard more fully, on the occasion of his last visit, which he happened to pay the Abbey during the winter feast of S. Martin,—in the presence of his clerks, Henry the archdeacon, Carlo the precentor, Robert de Andeville, Ralph the bald, and a great influx of the neighbours of both sexes and of every rank,—amidst the holy solemnities of the mass, he took care to have the dignities and liberties of the Abbey proclaimed aloud by his episcopal authority. By this act did he declare to all men that neither he nor his successors ought to have any pretence of controlling or governing it, or any ground of subjecting it to themselves, or any claim upon it beyond the manifestation of charity—and that he was neither able nor willing to demand anything therefrom, resting content with its free goodwill alone. And lest this episcopal testimony respecting Battel Abbey should be hereafter forgotten, it has appeared to us desirable thus to commit it to writing.

Abbot Ralph makes a new reliquary.

Now since (as we have before said) some of the very precious amulets of holy relics had been lost or despoiled of their gold and silver by unfortunate mischances, and many of the relics of the saints out of them, or which had been elsewhere obtained, were not so well enshrined as they deserved to be—the abbot and monks determined to buy lands with the proceeds of the gold and silver chains of some of these amulets, lest hereafter they should be robbed of them as before. This being done, in order that these pledges of the saints might not want a suitable receptacle, the abbot and monks caused a feretory to be made with gold and silver, of choice workmanship, and adorned with valuable jewels. And when it was finished, the venerable bishop Ralph, on his visit to Battel, consecrated it, and honourably deposited the saintly relics therein. He moreover

indulged all who should annually visit them, with seven days' exemption from penance.

The boundaries of the Leuga surveyed.

In those days many of the neighbours, pretending that the leuga around the Abbey included some of their lands, frequently vexed the abbot and monks with suits. Complaints of this having reached the king's ears, it was agreed, on all hands, that the leuga should be measured off with a line; and it was then found that all that the Abbey had held belonged to it; and even more, in many parts of the leuga, was included in the measurement. Thus was this complaint silenced, and the Abbey has ever since quietly possessed its leuga.

Thus, under the venerable Abbot Ralph, did the Abbey increase and prosper in every way, both within and without, so that in point of religion and hospitality, to say nothing of other virtues, it was accounted inferior to none. And this venerable man, delighting in the beauty of God's house, caused the church to be roofed with lead, and completed what was unfinished of the circuit of the walls. He enlarged the space of the Abbey, and enriched it with new buildings. He also devoted himself entirely, with the aid of his friends, in many ways to decorate the house in the best fashion, and with such various ornaments as the honour of God demanded. And besides this watchfulness over things external, neither tongue nor pen can tell with what zeal he sought the salvation of souls. It will not therefore be out of place to record some few things regarding him, although, to recite all, no language would suffice.

Character of Abbot Ralph.

Although he continually governed those who were under his authority, yet he himself was subservient to rules, and commanded no one as a master. He sustained the infirmities of others, and called them forth to strength. His acts corresponded with what he taught; his example preceded his doctrine. He inculcated a prompt attendance upon divine service, and, supporting his aged limbs

upon his staff, preceded the young men to it. Ever first at the choir, he was uniformly the last to quit it. Thus was he a pattern of good works—a Martha and a Mary. He was the serpent and the dove; he was a Noah amidst the waters. While he never willingly rejected the raven, he always gladly received the dove. He governed the clean and the unclean; a prudent ruler under all circumstances. He knew both how to bear with Ham, and how to bestow his blessing upon Shem and Japhet. Like a prudent husbandman, he caused the occupied lands to be promptly cultured, and those that lay waste to be added in, and by this means increased their yearly value by the sum of twenty pounds. Meanwhile, he overlooked not the spiritual husbandry, tilling earthly hearts with the ploughshare of good doctrine in many books which he wrote, stimulating them thereby to bear the fruit of good works; and although his style was homely, yet was it rich in the way of morality.

In the sparingness of his food he was a Daniel; in the sufferings of his body a Job; in the bending of his knees a Bartholomew, bending them full often in supplication, though he could scarcely move them in walking. Every day he sang through the whole Psalter in order, hardly ceasing from his genuflections and his psalmody three days previously to his death. Neither his racking cough, nor his vomiting of blood, nor his advanced age, nor the attenuation of his flesh to almost mere skin, availed to daunt this man, nor to turn him aside from any purpose of his elevated piety. But lo! after many agonies and bodily sufferings, when he was eighty-four years of age, and had been a monk sixty years and thirty-six days, and when he had flourished as abbot of Battel seventeen years and twenty days, the Householder summoned him to the reward of his day's penny. It was on the 4th of the kalends of September, in the evening of the day, that this holy, sweet, and humble father departed. He was lying upon his lowly couch, after partaking of a little

food, and had devoutly blessed several of the brethren and desired that others would come to him, when he was suddenly seized with a vomiting of blood more violent than usual, accompanied with portions of his lungs, torn to pieces by his long-continued cough; and the cough coming on at the same time, so tossed and tormented him as to take away his life. The brethren came running together with great lamentations and many tears, and devoutly commended his departing spirit to the hands of that Creator to whom it was returning. They afterwards committed his body to honourable sepulture within the church of Battel Abbey, in the north transept, before the altar of the Apostols.[140]

His death, Aug. 29.

King Henry was engaged beyond the seas, when the intelligence of father Ralph's decease reached the ears of Roger, bishop of Salisbury, who then held the administration of the royal laws throughout England; and he dispatched hither, with a minister of the king named John Belet, an ecclesiastic called William of Ely; and these two together made a summary of the whole abbacy and its appurtenances; and the government of the abbacy was committed for a time to one Æilward, a monk of the Abbey. But at length, some intrigues having sprung up (which can scarcely ever be avoided in this kind of changes) the custody of the whole establishment was intrusted to Belet, the king's minister, who held it (not to his own disadvantage) from the feast of S. Nicholas till the Sunday which is called *Album Pascha*, that is to say, until a new abbot was elected.

John Belet appointed Custos.

In the year of the Deific Incarnation 1125, at the purification of Mary, the holy Mother of God, a general edict of King Henry was promulged throughout all England, that all churches destitute of pastors should go, through proper representatives, to the presence of the king, then beyond sea,[141] in order that they might receive governors. Whereupon, on behalf of Battel

[140] "Ante memoriam apostolorum."

[141] The king went over to Normandy in 1123, and did not return until 1126.

Abbey, an able man named Hildeward, the prior, accompanied by three of the monks, crossed the sea, and presented himself before the monarch. A council being then summoned, the king—at the instance of William, archbishop of Canterbury, and Seffrid, who had recently been advanced to the see of Chichester—appointed, as abbot of Battel, Warner, a monk of Canterbury, a person eminent for his modesty, wisdom, and learning. This appointment being confirmed by an edict the week after Mid-lent, the prior and his companions hastened homewards, and arrived on the Sabbath before Palm Sunday; and those who had heretofore presided giving place, the whole establishment was promptly subjected to the rule of the abbot-elect. On the approach of Easter, Warner came to England, together with Archbishop William; and having obtained consecration on the third Sunday after Easter, previously to taking office, he was joyously and honourably received at Battel Abbey on the sixth day following, which happened on the eighth of the kalends of May.

Abbot Warner.

24 April, 1125.

Having thus taken the reins of government, Abbot Warner, exercising that prudence for which he was so remarkable, began, by degrees, to regulate and to restore to its former state, the house which, in a variety of ways, had been wasted by the king's ministers. And although, in consequence of the great unproductiveness of that year, poverty had seized the whole country, yet overcoming all disadvantages by prudent management, like a faithful servant of the great Householder, he so administered the affairs of the house, that in a short time poverty was exchanged for opulence.[142]

We have already stated that King Henry had, in his muni-

[142] The unseasonableness of the years 1124 and 1125 is recorded in the Saxon Chronicle. It "injured corn and all fruits in England, so that one acre's seed of wheat, that is, two seedlips, sold for six shillings" in the former year. In the latter "there was a famine and disease upon men and cattle; and it was so bad a season for all fruits as had not been for many years before."

ficence, given to this establishment the church of Caermarthen, with its appendages, where some brethren had been already collected for the service of God. But Bernard, the bishop of the diocese, allured by the pleasantness of the place, was extremely desirous of subjecting it to his authority. And after the matter had frequently been brought before the king, both by himself and by those in his pay, at length, upon the election of Abbot Warner, it was adjusted by the king's giving the place to the bishop, and presenting to the Abbey of Battel, in exchange, a certain land worth seventy shillings—a member of the royal manor of Mienes, called *Langenhersse*, for ever, free of all customs. This being confirmed by royal authority, and agreed to on both sides, the brethren immediately set out for England and returned home, while the bishop obtained the church alluded to, and the abbot took the land into his hands.

An exchange with the bishop of S. David's.

Bishop Seffrid being now elevated to the see of Chichester, there seemed to be a mutual good understanding between him and the abbot. When, however, both had been but a short time in office, the bishop, at the instance of those about him, summoned the abbot to attend his synod. Upon this the abbot, with prudent caution, required of a full chapter of his abbey what it behoved him to do in the matter. The brethren alleging the custom which had hitherto been observed, explained to him that it was founded on royal authority, and that he ought not to attend to any summons or requirement of this nature; still, if it pleased him to go thither of his own free will, he could do so without scruple.

Seffrid, bishop of Chichester, summons the abbot to his synod.

The abbot, assured by this answer, went voluntarily to the bishop, and pleaded the privileges of the Abbey which he governed. He took care also to state that he had not come upon compulsion, but only to avoid a violation of the mutual charity which had hitherto subsisted between them, and to claim that he would permit himself and his Abbey to remain,

as formerly, in peace, lest worse misunderstandings should arise. The bishop, pacified by these reasonings, removed every occasion of complaint, and, entertaining a very high regard for the Abbey (as well as for the abbot himself), he carefully cherished it by his counsel and aid during the period of his prelacy.[143]

Under this abbot, the restorations of the Abbey went on from day to day, for he applied himself with the utmost sagacity and prudence to increase the number of the monks; and taking delight in the decent beauty of God's house, he caused a portion of the church to be covered with lead. He also busied himself to perpetuate the memory of his devotedness by procuring many noble ornaments, such as precious vessels of gold and silver for the altar-service, together with cappae, and albs, and choice palls. Thus did he vigorously discharge his stewardship in things both domestic and external, seeking, at the same time, as became a well-instructed man, to promote religion for the salvation of his sons, and most honourably to preserve and recover, by legal means, the rights, possessions, and dignities of his Abbey.

Violent quarrel between them, and breach of hospitality.

While, by this careful management, he was enjoying accumulation of honour, he was often in the habit, at the winter festival of the blessed Martin, their common patron, of inviting the attendance of the bishop of Chichester to grace so great a solemnity. On a certain occasion, when the bishop, thus summoned, had come in a friendly manner, it chanced, after the festival had been duly observed, that the bishop's attendants, heated with the wine of the country,[144] began in a lofty style to upbraid the cellarers and servants of the Abbey, and, as if with their lord's sanction and authority (powerful enough

[143] Here, as in a former instance, there is a great inconsistency in the Chronicler's narration, for, as we shall almost immediately see, a violent quarrel broke out between the two dignitaries not long after.

[144] "Patrio calentes mero."

out of doors), threateningly to demand whatever they saw fit. But the ministers of the Abbey very properly resisting them, the matter reached the ears of the bishop, who manifested the greatest indignation, which the abbot attempted to soothe in a reasonable manner. But the bishop adding insolence to fury, the abbot's patience was at length exhausted. And when the bishop threatened to exercise the mastery, and to act as if the Abbey were his own, the abbot stoutly withstood him, and after many objurgations, uttered a speech which is not to be forgotten, namely, that no refreshment should be given, either to the bishop or his followers, as was the ordinary practice. Upon this the bishop grew pale with rage, and threatened to extort it by force; but the abbot manfully asserting his right to govern that royal Abbey as freely as he himself did his own bishopric, they parted with mutual obstinacy.

The bishop and his suite waited until the next day, to see whether the abbot would keep his word; but the abbot, regardful of the interests of posterity, could by no means withdraw his determination. The bishop, therefore, unable to control the servants of the Abbey, passed the hour unfed, and was obliged to procure necessary provisions for himself and his followers out of doors. The abbot and his people passed the following night in peace and quietness, notwithstanding the rage and fury of the others, and their threats of destruction; and sent them about their business at early dawn, unappeased and full of indignation. It was long ere the anger between the bishop and the abbot cooled down; but it led to no further contention, although it supplied a memorial to posterity. At length the bishop yielded to reason, and from that time, they both strove to cover their former discord by acts of love and kindness.

Death of K. Henry I.

In process of time, King Henry, who was in Normandy, yielded, in the thirty-sixth year of his reign, to the universal law of nature, and on the 4th of the nones of December bade a last farewell to this world. His body

being brought over to England from Liuns,[145] the place of his decease, was honourably entombed in the monastery which he had so liberally founded in honour of Mary, the blessed Mother of God, at Reading.

King Stephen.

In the year of the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ 1135, not long after the death of the noble King Henry, Stephen, count of Boulogne, his nephew, succeeded to the kingdom of England—his claims having the support of some of the chief men of the realm. He was anointed and crowned at Westminster, on the 11th of the calends of January, by William, archbishop of Canterbury. As soon as he was settled in the kingdom, there arose some deadly broils (of which however this is not the proper time to speak), and the nobles disagreed among themselves. When public affairs were at length set in order, the venerable abbot Warner, among others, was found, by some slight offence, to have incurred the royal displeasure, and certain other complaints having arisen, he thought it better to yield to circumstances. Not long afterwards therefore, before Christmas, being at Westminster, and taking the advice of certain persons (particularly that of Aubrey, the Pope's legate, then in England), he voluntarily resigned his abbacy, in the fourteenth year of his government. And thus, having only himself to care for, he retired to S. Pancras, a monastery greatly renowned for piety, lying near the castle of Lewes, where he remained in the exercise of religion until the day of his death.[146]

Abbot Warner offends the king, resigns his abbacy, and retires to Lewes Priory.

At the beginning of the year of the Divine Incarnation 1139, immediately after Christmas, King Stephen was at Canterbury, and there, by the concurrent advice of his queen, of the legate Aubrey, and of certain barons of the realm, he committed the abbacy of Battel to a foreign

[145] I. e., Lions-la-Foret, near Rouen, a royal hunting-seat.

[146] It is pretty certain from this account, that the abbot's offence was, his adherence to the cause of Maud, against the usurpation of Stephen.

monk, of Lonley, named Walter, brother of one of the most potent barons of the kingdom, called Richard de Lucy.

Abbot Walter de Lucy, 8 Jan. 1139.

This personage, who was distinguished alike for his great prudence and wisdom, for his eloquence, and for his extensive knowledge, both of literature and of business, had been sojourning in England for some time, with his kinsman Gausfrid, abbot of Saint Albans, and had, through his brother's influence, been introduced to the king, and found favour with the nobility. He was elected on the 6th of the ides of January, and at length, on the second of the ides of the same month, accompanied by Seffrid, bishop of Chichester, he was received with due honour at Battel Abbey.

Having thus gained full power, he began prudently to watch over the interests of the Abbey, both within-doors and without. And although at this period the nobles of the kingdom were at variance with each other, and although, in consequence of so bad an example, wicked men, abusing the royal clemency, disturbed the freedom and pillaged the wealth of the country on all sides, at pleasure, yet did this abbot manfully stand his ground, to preserve inviolate, amidst so many billows of the tempest, the treasures, lands, liberties, and royal customs of the church intrusted to him. Neither was he wanting in the greatest piety—both himself and his abbey, in the meantime, enjoying the steady protection of the king.

Dispute concerning a wreck in Dengemarsh.

About this time a storm happened, and a vessel belonging to the port of Romney (within the jurisdiction of the archbishop of Canterbury) laden with various commodities, was wrecked upon the land of the Abbey of Battel in Dengemarsh,[147] a member of Wye, the crew with difficulty saving their lives. Now it is necessary to state that, from a remote date, a certain law has been observed upon the sea-shore, namely, that when a vessel

[147] "Dengemareis," near Lydd, in Romney Marsh, contiguous to the promontory of Dengeness.

is shattered by the waves, if the crew escaping do not repair it within a certain term and time, it shall be given up with all its cargo, without challenge, to the lord of the soil, and be accounted as *wreck*. But King Henry, abhorring this custom, issued an edict, to remain in force during his reign, that if only one man should escape alive from the ship, he should have all these things. But with the new king failed the new law. For he being dead, the chiefs of the kingdom overthrew this recent edict, and resumed the custom which had been antiently observed. The tenants of Dengemarsh, therefore, according to maritime custom, and the royal privileges of Battel Abbey, made a forcible seizure of the wreck.[148]

Intelligence of this transaction reaching the ears of the archbishop, he hastened to court and made complaint before the king, charging the abbot of Battel with having used violence in the matter; and the king, without delay, commanded the abbot to appear before him. The cause was argued before a convention of nobles at the king's court, when William de Ypres, who then held the earldom of Kent, artfully accused the abbot as a transgressor of the peace, because he had acted contrary to the ordinances of King Henry. The king himself leaned to the archbishop; but after much disputation on both sides, the court was silenced in the following manner.

The abbot, having prepared his argument beforehand, spoke to the effect that, though King Henry was able at his pleasure to change the antient laws of the country during his own life, he could not bind posterity to such a change, without the common consent of the barons of the realm. But if those his (the abbot's) equals in rank—namely, the barons present

[148] Lambarde, author of the *Perambulation of Kent* (1570) quotes this narrative from the "Chronicles of Battell Abbay," with which he appears to have been acquainted. The laws of *wreck*, so mercifully modified by the first Henry, resumed their antient rigour from the time of this suit, but were again relaxed by a statute of 3 Edw. I, which enacts that if any live thing, as a man or a dog, escape from the vessel, such vessel shall not be accounted a legal wreck. (*Blackstone.*)

—would, with the assent of the royal court then sitting, agree to waive their own claim of that right which they now challenged in him, he himself would willingly relinquish his. But the great men present unanimously declared against this; and at length it was determined by common consent, that this court should be dissolved, and that the abbot, in right of his royal privilege, should hold a court for the performance of justice at Dengemarsh, on an appointed day, when the tenants of the archbishop should be in attendance. During the proceedings of this assembly, the sagacious abbot gave utterance to a remarkable speech, by which the king's mind was much softened. When the accusation was brought against him, he turned to the king, saying: "If thou, O king, but destroy ever so small a right of our Abbey, conferred and observed by King William and others, thy predecessors, may God grant that thou no longer wear the crown of England!"

The abbot was true to his appointment, but no one attended on the part of the archbishop until the day following. Thus no opportunity of passing judgment on the transgression being given, they went away disappointed, and the complaint was once more brought before the king, by the archbishop. The abbot, being summoned, again appeared; and the case being stated, it was adjudged, by common consent, that the abbot had made good his cause, and that he ought to suffer no further challenge on the subject from the primate. Upon this the court was dismissed, and every one went his way. The reverend abbot, disposing all things concerning the matter in question at his own pleasure, pacified the archbishop and his friends with a portion of the shipwrecked commodities, but reserved the principal things for himself and the Abbey of Battel—and so ended this affair.

At this time that noble personage, Hilary, who had obtained great notice and favour at the Roman court, succeeding the venerable Bishop Seffrid in the see of Chichester, the monastery of Battel began, through the malice of its adver-

saries, to suffer many troubles concerning its privileges. A detail of these proceedings will not be out of place here; since it will be both agreeable now, and of service hereafter, as a valuable memorial and an enduring monument of the dignities of the church of S. Martin of Battel, and as an invulnerable buckler against the artifices of envious foes. And although the patience of the prudent abbot Walter was sorely taxed for a great length of time, yet were the varied devices of his opponents nullified by his sagacity; so that, in the end, the thing is so honourably cleared up, that the very tediousness of the proceedings seems to have been advantageous. For by that delay both the dignity of the Abbey and the authority of its charters, conferred by the king's ancestors, were not only made familiar to the king's court, but widely published abroad, as something remarkable, among both high and low, over the entire kingdom; and hence was strengthened respect for the king's authority and the freedom of our Abbey. Let us now, therefore, explain the order of this controversy from its commencement.

Narration of the controversy between Hilary Bishop of Chichester, and Abbot Walter, 1148.

It is worth while, for the information of after times, to record the manner in which the dispute between Hilary, bishop of Chichester, of venerated memory, and Walter, abbot of S. Martin of Battel, concerning the dignities and liberties of their respective churches, though long protracted between them, gave way at last to a concord of peace and amity. That this is written with the pen of truth, the readers need entertain no doubt, although they should be apprised that many details are omitted, lest they should be wearied with the length of our narration.

In the year of our Lord's Incarnation 1148, whilst King Stephen, who sprang from the stock of the most pious and illustrious King William the great, held the government of England, namely in the thirteenth year of his reign, a certain reverend personage named Hilary, a man of honourable cha-

racter, and shining in the brightness of the liberal sciences, was made bishop of the church of the Holy Trinity of Chichester. Upon his instituting inquiries in every direction, as to the rights and dignities of his church, it was intimated to him that the church of S. Martin, which is called BATTEL—because God had there given to William the Conqueror the victory over his enemies—ought to be subject to his authority. Upon this, the venerable man often applied to Abbot Walter on the subject. The abbot, however, withstood his claims, and a very great dissension, the particulars of which shall now be given, was the result.

The bishop of Chichester compelled the attendance of the abbot of Battel at his synod at Chichester, and insisted on his payment of all episcopal dues according to the canons. He also demanded entertainment in the Abbey and in its manors, upon his episcopal right, as if by established custom. By these means he earnestly hoped to carry his point of subjecting the abbot and his establishment to his authority. In the further exercise of his usurped power, he declared that the abbot-elect of Battel was bound by ecclesiastical custom to seek consecration, with canonical profession, in the cathedral of Chichester, and thenceforward to be wholly subject to himself and his see.

The abbot, on the other hand, copied examples, not of pride, but of patience and humility. Sometimes by word of mouth, and sometimes by means of messengers dispatched to Chichester, he declared the freedom and privilege of his Abbey, explaining how King William—whom Divine Providence had conveyed into England in order to take possession of his just rights—had, upon the field of battle, with the concurrence of all his followers, made a vow to give that place to the Lord Christ, as freely as he should be enabled to acquire it for himself; and how, when by God's favour he had obtained the victory, he fulfilled that vow by building upon the spot an Abbey in honour of God and S. Martin, for the salvation of

all, and especially of all that were then slain, as free and quit of all exaction of earthly service, and from all subjection and authority and domination of bishops, as is Christ Church of Canterbury. He further showed how this had been ratified at the advice and with the attestation of Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury, and Stigand, bishop of Chichester, and many others by their signatures; and also how Stigand, bishop of Chichester, had, in the presence of Gausbert the first abbot, and his monks, to the utmost extent of his power, confirmed it in like manner by his letters; so that from that time, as all men knew, the Abbey of S. Martin of Battel had been totally exempt from the jurisdiction of the bishop of Chichester. In this reasonable manner did the abbot meet the claims of this great man, earnestly demanding, at the same time, that he would suffer the Abbey to retain, in pure and inviolable right, what it had hitherto possessed with the authority of such distinguished persons.

To this, however, the bishop would by no means consent; but, entertaining much ill-will against the abbot, threatened that, unless he attended the synod, he would, after the expiration of a year, bind him with the chain of excommunication, in solemn synod, according to canonical authority. Relying upon the power of Pope Eugenius (III), and the venerable Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury, and many others, whose favour he enjoyed, he hoped for nothing less than the entire subjugation of the abbot and convent of Battel to himself and his church. But, disappointed by vain hopes and counsels, he could not carry his intentions into effect. Thus hope, based upon doubtful conditions, has sometimes deceived many.

The bishop lays the abbot under an interdict.

At a certain time, during the reign of the above-mentioned most pious King Stephen, the abbot was summoned to attend a synod at Chichester. Not complying, he was interdicted by the bishop, with the understanding that, unless he should attend to make satisfaction within forty days, he should be suspended from

his office. When the abbot heard of this sentence, he hastened to the court at S. Alban's, and brought the matter into the royal hall; whereupon the king summoned one of his clerks, named Robert de Cornuvilla, and sent him to the bishop, commanding and charging him, "that as the Abbey of S. Martin of Battel was as free and quit from all exaction and oppression as the free chapel of the king, or as the royal crown itself, he should suffer those who dwelt therein to serve the Lord Christ in peace." He also fixed a term, when both he and the abbot should appear before him in London, namely, on the day of the octaves of St. Andrew,[149] that he, in the presence of his bishops and barons, might put an end to their dispute. On the appointed day both attended, and after many other causes had been argued, the abbot presented himself before the king, prepared, if any opposition should be offered, to make a stand upon a reasonable ground of equity for the freedom of his Abbey. But the bishop, detained by other affairs, neglected to appear before the king that day. The charters and ratifications subscribed by the great King William were read, and the king having sought the best counsel in the matter, commanded that the Abbey of S. Martin of Battel should remain entirely free from all subjection and exaction of the bishop of Chichester, according to the charters of King William and of the other kings his predecessors. On the following day, the abbot, having received the king's permission, returned home, the king himself declaring at his departure that he would in all things be a protector and defender of the Abbey of Battel, even as though it were his own free chapel, or his own royal crown.

Death of King Stephen, 1154.

Not long after, namely, in the year of our Lord's Incarnation 1154, on the 8th of the calends of November, the most pious King Stephen departed this life, and was interred in the church of Feversham, which he

[149] December 7.

had reared from its foundations, in honour of the holy Saviour of the world. The bishop, thinking this a favourable opportunity to press his claim, in solemn synod excommunicated the abbot for not having gone to Chichester when summoned. Upon this, one of the brethren of the Temple of Jerusalem, who was present, went in haste to London, where the abbot and his brother, Richard de Lucy, one of the nobles of England, by the command of the venerable Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury, were awaiting the coming of Henry, duke of Normandy, the future king, and laid the matter before the said Richard, and he, having conferred with his brother the abbot, appealed without delay to the archbishop. That venerable father, having taken counsel, sent one of his clerks, named Salomon, to the bishop, stating that the abbot was detained with him, awaiting the coming of his future lord, the Duke Henry, to London, and commanding him to relax the sentence which he had passed upon him, until they could come together. And the bishop, bowing to the wish of his lord the legate, relaxed it accordingly.

Henry II crowned.

Our lord the Duke Henry arriving, was raised to the royal dignity, at Westminster, on the 14th of the calends of January in the same year. He was crowned by the venerable Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury, primate of all England, and legate of the apostolical see; and as the great estates of the whole realm were in attendance, he determined all things justly by their advice. To the monasteries he confirmed, by his own authority, the possessions and privileges granted by his ancestors; and during the following Lent, he convened a general council at London, and ratified peace, and renewed, throughout England, the laws and customs of antient times. On this occasion some of the bishops and abbots got the charters and privileges of their churches confirmed by the new king's hand and seal.[150]

[150] "This was one of the means used by this prince to raise money, and to weaken such as had opposed him in the previous reign." (*Note in Lat. Edit.*)

Among the number came the abbot of Battel, who having exhibited the charters and writings of King William and the other kings in succession, obtained this confirmation of the monarch. When the bishop of Chichester heard of this transaction, he hastened to the archbishop, and signified to him, that the abbot held charters opposed to the dignities of the church of Canterbury, and also to those of his own church of Chichester, and that he had got them ratified by the seal of the present king. He therefore urged that they should, by their united influence, resist such ratification, lest the other abbots throughout England should allege a like privilege against their bishops, in consequence of this abbot's success. The archbishop, too ready to believe that such consequences might ensue, declared, with a most positive asseveration, that he would never yield his assent to aught that might further the abbot's design.

The king confirms the Abbey's charters.

It happened, the following day, that the king and the archbishop had an interview, and the archbishop introduced the subject, and declared that he ought not to suffer the church of Canterbury—which was the mother church of England, and by which he was invested with his crown—nor that of Chichester, its suffragan, to have the liberties and dignities which they had held from antient times annulled for the sake of the Abbey of Battel—an establishment of no very high authority and dignity. Now the abbot of that place was possessed of certain charters, in opposition to the liberties and dignities of those churches. He prayed, therefore, that he would utterly annul them by his royal authority, or that the charter of the abbot might not have the king's seal until it was amended by his counsel, and the churches of Canterbury and Chichester were assured of their rights. The king, yielding to the wishes of so eminent a personage as his spiritual father, by whom he had so recently been invested with his sovereignty, summoned the chancellor, and forbade the confirmation of the

The archbishop interferes to get this confirmation nullified.

abbot's charter by the royal seal. To be brief, this, becoming matter of common report, speedily reached the abbot's ears. The next day, therefore, the abbot again repaired to court, but as the king was going a-hunting, nothing could be done, and he returned to his inn.[151]

Early the following morning the abbot went once more to Westminster, and there waiting before the altar at which the king was about to hear mass, cogitated with himself on the probable issue of affairs. On the king's arrival, after the entrance of the host, the abbot went up to him:— "My lord," said he, "your excellency had given orders for the confirmation of our charter by the royal seal; wherefore it is now refused I cannot undertake to say. Let your clemency command that the royal assurance stand firm, and let not the word of a king appear to be overthrown by the envy of any man!" So the chancellor was sent for, and the king ordered the abbot's charter to be confirmed by the application of the seal. But before the words were well finished, the bishop, suspecting what was in hand, bustled forward and addressed the king in the following manner:

The abbot appeals to the king.

"My lord, your clemency has not forgotten, I trust, the complaint which the venerable archbishop of Canterbury and myself, only three days since, laid before you. This abbot of Battel seeks charters opposed to the dignities of our churches, of which dignities, hitherto held by canonical right, they will have occasion to bewail the loss, if his subtilty should prevail. Let your royal dignity, therefore, withhold the confirmation he desires, lest peradventure others, from his example, should be seen to make head against their bishops."

The bishop's plea.

Notwithstanding this protest, the king ordered the abbot's charter to be sealed, and then gave directions for the bishop

[151] At Battlebridge, in Southwark.

and the abbot, together with the chancellor, to meet the archbishop, when the charter could be read over in their hearing, with a view to its amendment, under their counsel, if anything required correction; and thus the abbot might go home with his charter in peace. But if they could not agree in opinion, the abbot's charter should be kept by the chancellor in the king's chapel, until the king's decision relative to it should take place.

When the canon of the mass had been sung through as far as the words Pax Domini, the bishop, according to the usual practice, having received the *pax* from the priest, offered it to the king, and afterwards stretched it forth to the abbot, to the great astonishment of many.[152]

The parties meet at Lambeth.

The bishop and the abbot, attended by the chancellor and many others, met together before the archbishop at Lambeth, and the charter of the great King William, by a copy of which all the charters of the subsequent kings had been confirmed, was read. When they came to a certain expression in it, namely, "that the Abbey of Battel should be as entirely free from all subjection of bishops as Christ Church, Canterbury," a clamour burst forth on all sides,

[152] The *pax*, otherwise called a *tabula pacis*, or osculatorium, was an instrument antiently in use in the Roman Catholic church. The apostolical command, "Salute one another with a holy kiss," was, in the earlier ages of Christianity, literally obeyed. At the words, *the peace of God be with you*, from the bishop, the people answered, *and with thy Spirit*, the clergy kissed the bishop, the laymen the laymen, and the women the women. When the sexes worshipped in separate parts of the church, no impropriety resulted from this practice, but afterwards, when, as at present, the men and women assembled in the same place, the pax was introduced. This was first kissed by the ministering priest, then by the clerk, and lastly by the people in succession. The pax was not among the articles laid aside at the Reformation, for the ecclesiastical commissioners of Edw. VI, in 1548, say: "The clerke shall bring down the paxe, and standing without the church-door, shall say loudly to the people these words: 'this is the token of joyful peace, which is betwixt God and man's conscience,'" &c. The specimen, given in the *Archæologia*, vol. xx, p. 536 (from which I have derived these particulars), is carved with a representation of the crucifixion.

The presentation of this pledge of Christian peace and charity by the bishop, to a person whom he had lately excommunicated, and who was still labouring under his displeasure, was quite sufficient to excite the surprise of the spectators; nor was it forgotten by the chancellor, Thomas à Becket, the abbot's advocate, at a subsequent stage of this lengthened controversy.

some asserting it to be contrary to canon law, and others that it was inimical to the dignities of the church of Canterbury. Some cried out that this phrase was frivolous, and many angrily interpreted it in another sense. Thus diversity of opinion produced much confusion.

When the charter had been read through, Bishop Hilary, perceiving that not one of his predecessors was to be found among the attesting witnesses, judged that the high dignity of the sacred canons was for ever disparaged by the import of that expression, and proposed that it should be expunged by the authority of the present judges. The archbishop coinciding in that opinion, the outcry was prolonged, and although the abbot maintained his ground with much moderation, the commotion was not stayed. The chancellor, therefore, finding that the disagreement continued, took his departure, carrying away the charter with him to the king's chapel, and there delivered it for safe keeping, according to the king's command. But the abbot, by the advice of his friends, went about his own affairs, nothing doubting of God's help.

Then was the bishop merry and glad; for he trusted that the abbot of Battel and his Abbey would be entirely deprived of the confirmation of their charter. But, as the Scripture saith, "*Man proposes, but God disposes,*" so Christ suffered not His church to want its antient and rightful privileges, for His preventing mercy in due time caused all to work for good.

Hugh de Mortimer rebels, and the abbot seeks the king's favour.

The same year, at Easter, a certain baron of England named Hugh de Mortimer,[153] a man of great influence, abilities, and wealth, and a brave soldier, despising the king's youth, and holding his efforts in contempt, fortified his castles,[154] and refused to submit himself to his authority. When this news reached the king,

[153] This turbulent nobleman induced Roger, Earl of Hereford, to fortify his castles of Gloucester and Hereford against the king, himself doing the same with his castles of Cleobury, Wigmore, and Brugge or Bridgnorth. His long life of violence was closed by his retirement to the abbey of Wigmore, where he became a monk.

[154] This was one of the great social miseries of the preceding reign. "Every rich man,"

he collected a considerable army, and besieged Hugh in one of his castles called Bregge (Bridgnorth), and surrounded it with a vallum and a camp, thus cutting off all hope of his escape. The abbot having obtained, as it appeared to him and his friends, a fair opportunity, went thither to the king; and (as seemed meet in a business of this kind) honoured him with gifts, and spoke to him about his charter. Having received a very favourable answer from the king, he retired to a certain estate of his own in the neighbourhood, to remain until the third day.

Not long afterwards, King Henry, having compelled Hugh to surrender, commanded throughout England, that the archbishops, bishops, and most of the abbots, with all the earls and barons, should assemble there on the fourth day before the summer feast of S. Benedict. At this convention, peace was made between the king and Hugh. The third day, after the peace, the abbot of Battel arrived, and by the advice of his brother, Richard de Lucy, and other friends, went the next day to the king, and importuned him concerning his charter.

Obtains it,

The king took the advice of those who were in his confidence. And by the favour of God, and by the aid of the blessed Martin, confessor of Christ (who never deserts those that put their trust in him), coupled with the exertions of earthly friends, namely, Reginald, earl of Cornwall,[155] and Richard de Humez, the king's tribune, who were upon most intimate terms with Richard de Lucy and

says the Saxon Chronicle (regn. Steph.) "made his castles, and held them against the king; and the land was filled with castles. Grievously they oppressed the miserable people of the country with their castle-works. When the castles were made, they filled them with devils and evil men." Here they imprisoned all such as they could take who were supposed to possess wealth, and put them to inexpressible torments, in order to extort their gold and silver. They also taxed the inhabitants of the towns so mercilessly, and so ravaged the country, that the towns were deserted, and the labours of agriculture utterly suspended. "Then," naïvely continues the Chronicle, "were corn, and flesh, and cheese, and butter dear."

[155] Natural son of Henry I.

Abbot Walter, the king was induced to return to the abbot the desired charter, and to send it, through him, to the Abbey of Battel, which is the token and pledge of the crown-royal of England. Then did the dependents of the abbot and the friends of the Abbey of Battel rejoice, and dance in the fulness of their joy; but their enemies were everywhere filled with shame and confusion of face. The abbot took leave of the king with thanks, retired from the court with his charter, and in due time arrived at Battel. There the charter was read over to the brethren, and the abbot related all that had befallen him, while all rejoiced in their very hearts, and gave glory to God.

and gets his charters ratified.

At the feast of Christmas following, this most excellent king held his council at Westminster, and, all affairs being settled, sailed over into Normandy to transact business there.

The same year, on the day of the decollation of S. John the Baptist, the abbot, on account of certain affairs relating to the Abbey of Battel, crossed the sea, and went to the king. And finding him at Saumur, by the advice of the queen, and of his brother Richard de Lucy, who had accompanied the king, he had an interview with him; and everything having been done agreeably to his wishes, he returned to England.

The abbot goes over to Normandy.

This proceeding excited the ill-will of some of the churchmen of England, who imagined that the abbot had secretly made known their false deeds to the king, with a view to call forth his hatred of them. This suspicion, however, ultimately appeared to all to have been most unjust. The bishop of Chichester, thinking that his credit with the king might be shaken by the report of the abbot, and having other business of his own, passed over to the king about the time of the winter feast of S. Martin, and remained with him until his return to England.

Renewal of hostilities by the bishop summoning the abbot to Chichester on papal authority.

The first week of the following Lent, there came to Battel two deans of the bishop of Chichester, namely, Ansger of Lewes and Thomas of Hastings, bringing with them five priests. After due introduction, they showed the abbot letters of Pope Adrian, which required that he should without delay make his reply thereupon to Henry, archdeacon of Chichester. The abbot retired to a secret place, and having read the letters to the prior and some of the brethren, asked their advice as to their contents; after which he made answer that he would obey them as far as he was at liberty to do so, saving the honour of his lord the pope, his fidelity to the king of England, the safety of his own person and order, and the rights of his Abbey.

On receipt of this reply, the messengers brought forward other matters, saying that John, dean of the church of Chichester, Henry the archdeacon, and Roger the treasurer of that church, did, on the part of the pope, command him (the abbot) to appear at Chichester, on the Sunday which is called *Letare Jerusalem*,[156] there to hear the orders of the pope. They then took leave.

The abbot goes to Chichester.

The abbot therefore relying, as he was ever wont to do, upon the aid of God, of the blessed Virgin Mary, and of S. Martin, the confessor of Christ, and having conferred with the archbishop of Canterbury, and with some others on whom he could depend, went on the appointed day to Chichester. As soon as he entered the chapter-house where all were assembled, they all arose and respectfully conducted him to a seat, and when they had reseated themselves around him and held their peace, the abbot addressed them in the following terms:—

The abbot's speech.

"My lords and brethren,—Certain members of your body, lately coming to us, brought letters of our lord the pope, summoning me by his authority to come

[156] Midlent Sunday.

hither, to-day, to hear the commands of his venerable lordship. Out of respect and honour for so excellent a father, I am here present, prepared, as far as is consistent with his own dignity, with my fidelity to our lord the king of England, with the safety of my person and order, and with the just rights of my Abbey, to obey those commandments."

The dean, upon hearing this, forbade any one to make a reply, until he had first taken advice upon the subject. He therefore called aside those who enjoyed the highest authority, and, after conference with them, returned and addressed the abbot thus :—

The dean's speech.

"Doubtless, venerable Master Abbot, as the matter stands, you have come hither on a summons issued by our lord the pope. It remains now for you to show us the pope's letters which have been directed to you, so that, beloved brother, we may thereby lay before you those things which have been enjoined upon us in proper order. And it will be for you, upon consideration, either with downcast countenance to submit to their authority, or with haughty brow to defy them." But the abbot had not brought the letter with him; nor indeed had he calculated that any one would have questioned him concerning it. Then one of the clerks offered the dean the counterpart of the letter, and having received orders, read it in the hearing of all present.

The pope's letter.

"Adrian,[157] bishop, the servant of the servants of God, to his beloved son, Walter, abbot of Battel, health and apostolical benediction. To him who refuses submission to his superior, obedience will be justly denied by his own subordinates. It has come to our knowledge, that you refuse due obedience to our venerable brother, Y., bishop of Chichester, to whom you have made profession thereof, and that you object to obey his mandates; which is a thing very pernicious and contrary to all reason, as you will

[157] This was Adrian IV, the only Englishman that ever sat in the chair of St. Peter. His original name was Nicholas Breakspear.

easily find if you call to remembrance the punishment of the first man. And therefore, by these present writings we command, that you be careful to obey him faithfully as your bishop and father, as also the church committed to him. Otherwise, we would have you understand, that the sentence which our said brother has canonically pronounced upon you on this account, shall be confirmed by us, as God is our helper. Given at Rome, at S. Peter's, on the calends of March."

The letter having been read, the dean proceeded:—"You have heard, Master Abbot, how our lord the pope exhorts you to pay obedience to your superiors, and most especially to this church of Chichester, and to your bishop, Hilary. And it becomes your prudence to mark, upon what ground the pope has interposed for your bishop. When the Abbey of Battel was reared from its foundations, the first abbot elected thereto obeyed the canons, and obtained his consecration and made profession in this holy church. And afterwards all his successors, whose names we do not remember, and even you yourself, Walter, whom we see sitting before us, and who now govern the Abbey, have without doubt done the same. But since your prudence hath declined in some respects from the path of obedience you professed, this holy church, and we who are her sons, demand that you, as becomes a son, do assure your mother, namely this church, that, all quibbles apart, you will henceforward, in all things, pay her canonical obedience. Now truly, reverend father, your charity very well knows that the canons have ordained, that a person about whom doubts are entertained should be bound, either by legal witnesses or by ecclesiastical oaths, as well as by a written document confirmed by his seal. When our lord, Bishop Hilary, had assumed the government of this your holy mother church, according to canonical rule he interdicted you and a certain other personage of his diocese, because you did not come to the synod of Chichester, though you had been summoned hither, once, twice, and thrice. That other personage, seek-

ing pardon in submissive terms, obtained the same, whereas you, still remaining contumacious for a whole year, were bound in the holy synod with the chain of excommunication, whereby also we hold you bound to this very day. Wherefore this holy church, commiserating you as her son, requires of you to lay aside your opposition, and giving ear to us your brethren, to acknowledge those things which you justly ought to do, without delay. And, as we have said, a doubtful person must be bound by one of three obligations, according to ecclesiastical custom, we, in consideration of the honour and dignity of your Abbey and of your person, have considered it most becoming and proper that you should write just a little schedule, containing the condition of your profession to this church and to ourselves, and that you should confirm the same in the presence of witnesses, by affixing your seal; so that henceforth, all doubt being removed, this church may cherish you in love as a son, and in all things afford you aid and counsel. Thus, peace being imparted, you, being restored to the bosom of holy church, may return home with gladness of heart. And as to those things in which your brotherhood has failed in duty towards our venerable lord, Bishop Hilary, we will act the part of mediators, and by God's grace assuage his indignation and wrath against you. May it therefore please you to take the advice of a man of such great authority and eminence, and such rare abilities, and to give us your reply upon these matters in becoming and acceptable words. That reply, if given in gentle terms, we shall doubtless receive favourably; but if, on the contrary, you employ swelling and vaunting language, we shall as manfully reject it. We believe, however, that the ingenuous greatness of your race is not lifted up by the shadow of pride, but is more readily overcome by the force of patience and of reason."

The dean having thus spoken, and the rest having declared the reasoning to be just and given their assent to it, silence was proclaimed, and the abbot replied as follows:—

The abbot's reply.

"Most beloved fathers: pondering in the secret chambers of my heart the matter of your speech presented in such soft phrases, the excellency of the noble freedom and of the famous name of the Abbey of Battel comes to my remembrance; and the unexpectedness of these things disturbs a mind already overburdened with troubles. I was prepared to reply to you, as my dearest fathers and brethren, in a becoming and temperate discourse, hoping by every means to give you satisfaction; but astonished at your unlooked-for words, I am constrained so to pass from one thing to another, that I fear lest necessity should compel me to exceed due bounds in my reply. I will not, however, like a certain person, draw forth a sword anointed with honey; but, resting upon my well-founded claims, endeavour to give you satisfaction.

"You are fully aware, by common report, how great a degree of freedom and dignity the Abbey of Battel, as founded by the noble King William, enjoys. Would you speak of the first abbot of our place, Gausbert by name; it is not unknown to you that he, in the same Abbey of Battel, under the king's authority, and with the assent of Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury, obtained his consecration from Stigand, then bishop of this church, without profession. If Henry his successor, and others of my predecessors, can be proved (as they should be) to have done aught contrary to the privileges of the Abbey, it does not concern me. For I—the least of them all—can call to mind nothing that *I* have done contrary to those rights; but everything for the safety of them have I done. But even if I have through ignorance or inconsideration failed in duty towards the rights and dignities of the Abbey, it becomes me, under the dictates of sound reason, to reform whatever has been done amiss. For, 'it is the part of a prudent man,' as one saith, 'in adversity to correct an error, and in prosperity to observe moderation.' And therefore I, holding the sole management of the affairs of our

Abbey, shall exert myself to amend those things which have been done against it, either by myself or by my predecessors. But if I am proved to have failed in any respect towards this church, I am quite ready to make due atonement, saving always, as I before said, the honour due to our lord the pope, the honour and fidelity due to the king of England, saving also my person and order, and the rights of my Abbey.

"You affirm that I am bound by your venerable bishop with the chain of excommunication. But this is not proved to have been notified to me hitherto, either by your bishop or by any other person. If it be true, I marvel for the prudence of a man of such great discretion. I wonder also at the hastiness of his sentence, since it is incapable of proof that I have done anything contrary to the statutes of the aforesaid churches. For if one wished rashly to contend against this, he would go abroad and speak and hear, and thus—all doubt being removed—the thing would reach the limits of truth."

No one present made any formal reply, but all were crying out at once; the abbot therefore continued his speech.

"The schedule which you demand of me is not required by the pope's letter to me; neither does there appear any good reason why I should give one. But as I wish everything settled justly and quietly as it concerns yourselves, I beseech you to grant me a respite, until I can go into foreign parts to our lord the king (whose royal chapel and a pledge of whose royal crown our Abbey is acknowledged to be), to hear his commands upon this business; and then, as far as may be lawful, to render obedience to the wishes of Bishop Hilary himself, to whom, and not to you, our lord the pope enjoins it, that all things may be done advisedly. I neither desire to overthrow whatever is due from us to you and this church; nor do I wish our church, which is a free one, to be rendered subject to yours; and our lord the king has taken care to prevent our doing anything rashly in these matters without his permission."

But all refused to give respite, and some even asserted that the king had, in their hearing, given orders that the Abbey of Battel should pay what was due to the church of Chichester, and therefore the respite ought on no account to be granted, lest the affair, so protracted, should never come to a decision. Still the abbot insisted upon some delay until he could visit the king: he reminded them, moreover, that he could do nothing in the matter without the advice and permission of his brethren the monks of Battel. For he said, he "was mortal and should die, but the Abbey of Battel would remain after he was dead, and therefore he would do nothing without their concurrence. On these grounds it was necessary that respite should be given."

But they opposed him in many ways, and advanced many opinions; and the abbot standing firm in requiring a respite, the dean commanded silence, and thus addressed him:

The dean. "Master Abbot," said he, "this congregation requires the schedule before demanded of you on account of ambiguity, to be written by you, and kept in this church as a memorial, that henceforward—all doubt being removed—whatever is due to this holy church may be rendered by yourself and your successors. *We* are the church, and though the bishop depart, we shall remain; and therefore we demand this of you."

But the abbot resisted them, and would by no means assent; and after they had long persisted in their demand to no purpose, the dean perceiving that the abbot stood unmoved, and that no ground was gained, and moreover that the day was far spent, commanded silence again, and concluded in these words:

"Our lord, our bishop, our pastor, our father, Hilary—that learned, virtuous, honourable, and religious personage, when he crossed the seas, delivered to us, his disciples, as to his sons, this form of words; and by it instructed, conjured, and commanded us, reverend father abbot, that we should

compass and surround you, in order that you should execute for us and for this church the schedule which we demand. As becomes the sons of so great a father, we do therefore obey his commandment by requiring it of you. But, seeing that it does not please your wisdom to perform our demand, we leave the matter as it stands, and will report all things to our father by our letters and our messenger, and await his answer thereupon."

This was said to the dislike of every one. The court broke up in confusion, amidst the murmurs of all present, who left their seats, and went away every one about his own affairs. The abbot having made his prayers before the altar of the Holy Trinity there, and fortified himself with the sign of the holy cross, returned home with his friends.

The parties separate without coming to terms.

The abbot, upon consideration, came to the conclusion that these proceedings would never be brought to an end, except by the king's decision; he therefore, through a messenger, explained the position of affairs to his brother, Richard de Lucy, who communicated the intelligence to the king. Upon this the king summoned the bishop, and commanded that he should permit the abbot of Battel, as his own chaplain, to rest in peace from all complaints, till he should return into England. And this was done.

The abbot applies to his brother, Richard de Lucy.

After Easter the king hastened to the coast, and embarking with a fair south wind, arrived at the port of Southampton, and thence took his journey towards London. When the abbot heard of this, he prepared what was necessary, and setting out, met him at the castle of Ongar,[158] in Essex, which belonged to his brother, Richard de Lucy. After mutual congratulations, that the king had, by God's favour, prosperously reached home, the king, amongst much other discourse,

[158] "Angra."

commanded the abbot to attend on the coming Whitsunday at St. Edmund's (where he was then to be ensigned with the royal crown),[159] fortified and furnished with such things as were necessary, that justice might be done to him and the Abbey, against Hilary, bishop of Chichester (to whom also he had appointed the same term for this business), provided he could reasonably make good his claims. Upon this the abbot retired to his manor of Hou, not far from the castle above named, there to remain until the appointed day.

The king determines to hear the cause in person.

In the year of the Lord's Incarnation 1157, that is to say, in the third year of the reign of King Henry the younger, grandson-by-daughter of the great King Henry, in the second month after his return from beyond the seas, whither he had gone the preceding year, and the year in which he led his army into Wales; on Whitsunday—which this year fell upon the feast of S. Dunstan[160]—that memorable king was crowned at S. Edmund's, in the presence of a great concourse of persons, namely, the archbishop of Canterbury, with the bishops, abbots, earls, barons, and a multitude of people, and the day was spent with becoming festivity. Among the venerable persons present were Hilary, bishop of Chichester, and Walter, abbot of Battel—summoned there on that particular day, that the controversy which had been so long pending concerning the rights of their respective churches might be settled by this noble prince.

But the king being much occupied with other affairs, was unable to determine their cause then, but fixed a term for them at Colchester, whither, on his departure from S. Edmund's, he had determined to go. On the Thursday following, all these, with many others, went to that place. The following day, Friday, the abbot, with Richard de Lucy, applied

[159] "This circumstance is unnoticed by any other chronicle, as far as I have been able to discover. Bury was distinguished for its loyalty." (*Note in Lat. Ed.*).

[160] May 19.

to the king, who directed them to retire to the chapter-house of the monks there serving God, to await his coming.

After the king had heard mass, he entered the chapter-house, strictly ordering that no one except those whom he should summon by name should follow. He then called Thomas [à Becket] the chancellor, Robert earl of Leicester, Richard de Humez the tribune, Richard de Lucy, Warine Fitz-Gerald, and Nicholas de Sigillo. There was also present a certain physician named Ralph; and likewise Henry of Essex,[161] the king's tribune, who had been previously sent to the chapter-house to the abbot by the king. In addition to these, William, the king's younger brother, came, and took his seat with the rest near the king. *The court.*

All having taken their places with our lord the king, and the abbot sitting by with three of his monks, Richard de Lucy thus opened the pleadings:

"My lord king! your excellency has vouchsafed to summon my brother, the abbot of Battel, hither, that the dispute between him and the bishop of Chichester, concerning the dignities and liberties of their respective churches, which is now of long standing, may be decided before you. The abbot is present with his charter and privileges." The king then desired the abbot to produce his charters; and Thomas, the chancellor, read the charter of the great King William before them. The king thereupon took the charter into his own hands, and having closely examined it, deigned to commend it in high terms, blessing the soul of that noble king, who had regarded the Abbey he had erected with so strong affection as to fortify it with such great liberties and dignities. The chancellor next read another charter of King William upon the personal affairs of the abbot. *Richard de Lucy opens the case.*

[161] This was a very unfortunate personage. In the same year in which the transactions recorded in the text occurred, he let fall the royal standard in the war waged against the Welsh; and in 1163, being accused of cowardice by his near kinsman, Robert de Montfort, and failing in the duel, he became a monk at Reading. (*Vide Note in Lat. edit.*)

This, in the same manner, the king took and examined, and commanded it to be put by with the rest, and carefully kept. He also declared, that if ever he himself, under divine inspiration, should found an abbacy, he would prescribe for it similar liberties and dignities to those of Battel Abbey. He also examined the charters of the other kings, namely, those of King William the younger, and of King Henry, and at the same time, the charter confirmed by his own seal, and commanded that they should in like manner be carefully put aside and preserved.

Then the chancellor, addressing the abbot, said: "Master Abbot, the bishop of Chichester, with reason, as many think, employs very strong arguments against you, asserting that you have made profession in the church of Chichester. Wherefore you must be prepared to meet this charge." But the abbot affirmed, that he had done nothing contrary to the dignity or freedom of his abbey. The king upon this, turning to the chancellor, said: "Profession is not contrary to the dignities of churches, for those who make it promise nothing beyond what they ought in justice to do." Richard de Lucy hearing this, again spoke: "My lord; your highness has heard the privileges granted by the noble King William to his Abbey, which he styled *Battel*, because God had there given him victory over his enemies, and which things that Abbey—which is your own royal chapel and the pledge of your royal crown—has preserved inviolate until now. Wherefore I avow, that that Abbey ought to be held in high account, by you and by all us Normans, inasmuch as at that place the most noble King William, by God's grace and the aid of our ancestors, acquired that whereby you, my lord king, at this time, hold the crown of England by hereditary right, and whereby we have all been enriched with great wealth. We therefore pray your clemency to protect, with the right hand of your authority, that Abbey, with its dignities and liberties, and to order that it, with all its possessions, may remain as free as it has ever

been known to be in the times of your ancestors. But if this pleases not your authority, I beg, with suppliant voice, that you will remove my brother the abbot from his place, lest the Abbey have occasion to mourn the loss, in his time, of the liberties which it had preserved inviolate in that of his predecessors." Upon this, Robert, earl of Leicester, and others, cried out, that the king would take equal care to preserve this Abbey as he would his crown or the acquisitions of their ancestors; and the king declared that he could by no means consent to any measure by which, in his time, the Abbey should lose its privileges; he added, that he would confer with the bishop, and arrange everything in a peaceable manner. He then immediately arose, and went away to attend to other business.

The trial resumed.

On the Tuesday after the octaves of Pentecost, in the morning, the king entered the chapter-house of the monks, attended by the archbishops Theobald of Canterbury and Roger of York; the bishops Richard of London, Robert of Exeter, Robert of Lincoln; the abbots Silvester, of S. Augustine at Canterbury, Gausfrid of Holme; Thomas the chancellor; the earls Robert of Leicester, Patrick of Salisbury; the barons Henry of Essex, Reginald de Warenne, Richard de Lucy, Warine Fitz-Gerald and some others, with a great multitude of people. Hilary, bishop of Chichester, and Walter, abbot of Battel, were also present. After a dispute between the venerable Theobald of Canterbury and Silvester abbot of S. Augustine without the walls of the city of Canterbury, concerning the profession of the abbot to Christ Church, had been investigated, Richard de Lucy arose, all present paying great attention, and addressed the king in these words:—

De Lucy's speech.

"This day has been appointed by your excellency, my lord king, whose good fortune equals your virtues, for my venerable brother Walter, ruler of your Abbey of Battel, to come to the consistory of this place, against

the reverend Hilary, bishop of Chichester, for the settlement of the controversy so long maintained between them, touching the privileges of their respective establishments. Obedient to your mandate, he is come, prepared to give satisfaction to any one who has aught to allege against him, consistently with your honour, and the rights of the Abbey committed to his keeping.

"This your Abbey of Battel, having been reared from its foundations by the most noble King William, on account of the victory which God there gave him over his enemies, was fortified with great dignities and liberties, which up to this time are proved to have been held inviolate. That Abbey should therefore be held in high estimation, both by you, my lord king, and by all us Normans, inasmuch as there the noble King William, by the will of God and by the counsel and aid of our fathers, overcame his foes who unjustly sought to take from him the crown and realm of England, and acquired them for himself and his successors. From your near consanguinity to him, this whole people has now to rejoice that you, by hereditary right, occupy his throne—while we, by the gifts of his beneficence, and by succession from our ancestors, enjoy abundance of possessions and riches. Therefore, my lord, most excellent of monarchs, all this assembly of Norman noblemen heartily implore you strictly to protect that place —as the monument of your triumph and of ours—in its proper dignity and freedom against all its adversaries, and most especially *against the machinations of the English*, so that it may be exposed to no damage.

"But if it should not please your good will to do this, may you command my brother, the abbot, to retire from his office, and vacate the place in favour of any one else who might in future befriend it. For it were better for him to lay down his pastoral charge, and to pass his life in the freedom of a poor and private monk, than, while occupying that elevated seat, to be oppressed with the unjust yoke of slavery through the

cunning of certain persons; and lest the whole Norman nobility have occasion to mourn the loss, during his government, of the privileges of the Abbey, hitherto preserved inviolate—through the protection of your ancestors—by his predecessors, as the token of your royal crown, and of their acquisitions,"

Having thus spoken, he sat down, and the abbot, rising, spoke to the following effect:—

"My lord—I have come hither at your command, as my brother Richard has truly said. If any one has aught to allege against me, or against the liberties and dignities of the Abbey of Battel, which is your own free chapel, as well as a pledge of your royal crown, I will, with your permission, reply to his objections. It is proper, however, that the charters of the Abbey, granted by the noble King William at its foundation, and confirmed by his successors, and even by yourself, should first be heard by you and all here present, if you will command it." *The abbot.*

Then the abbot delivered King William's charter to the king, by whose orders a certain clerk read it in the hearing of all. When this had been done, Thomas [à Becket] the king's chancellor, looking towards the bishop of Chichester, said: "My lord bishop, your charity has heard what has now been done before our lord the king, and in the audience of all present. It is now permitted to your prudence to reply, if it so please you; for it is you, as it appears to us, that this matter most concerns." Then the bishop arose and said:—

"I am not addicted, like many, to roaming all the world over,[162] but induced by love and honour to you, my lord king, and quite unaware of this kind of opposition, I have come into these parts of your realm with the others who are present. But if it please you, and the abbot, and the rest now before you who are well disposed, an *The bishop.*

[162] A stroke at the abbot.

arrangement can be made, by your mediation, between me and the abbot, without damage either to our church of Chichester, or to the Abbey of Battel. With that intention have I come hither. Even if I did not know this to be your desire, I should of necessity—though unaware of the opposition to be brought against me, and unprepared for it—make satisfaction for myself and for the church of Chichester committed to my charge."

But some objected to any compromise, saying that the controversy, so long maintained between them, ought to be brought to a close, and not continued any further. Upon this the bishop proceeded with a loud voice—all attentively listening—in these words: "Since you refuse a compromise for peace, I will give our lord the king and all here present, a detailed account of the matters hitherto in dispute between us, respecting the rights of my church of Chichester." With this introduction he proceeded:—

The bishop denies the right of the king to interfere in spiritual matters.

"Jesus Christ, my lord king"—the words *Jesus Christ our Lord*, he repeated three times, and then added —"Hear ye all, and understand. Jesus Christ our Lord, in the disposition of this world, has constituted two places and two powers, one spiritual, the other material. The spiritual is that concerning which our Lord Jesus Christ spake to all his disciples and their successors, in our first bishop Peter the apostol, namely: 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church.' From that time, as your charity knows, it has grown to be a custom in the church of God that the bishops of holy church, being vicars of the said blessed Peter, the prince of the apostols, should preside in the worthy governance thereof. Hence to us who are set over God's church, was it said, by our Lord Jesus Christ, through those blessed apostols: 'Whoso heareth you, heareth me.' And hence, the church of Rome, being invested with the apostolship of that prince of the apostols, holds such great dignity of power throughout the

world, that no bishop, no ecclesiastical person can, without his appointment or permission, be deposed from his office."

At this the king, stretching forth his hands, said: "It is quite true that a bishop cannot be *deposed;* still, by outstretched hands, he may be *expelled.*" Whereupon all laughed, and the bishop began again:—

"As I have already said, even so say I again, that the church has been thus constituted from antient times. Neither is it lawful for any layman—no, not even for a king—to confer ecclesiastical liberties and dignities upon churches, nor to take them away when once conferred, unless by the permission or confirmation of the said father, as ecclesiastical authority by the Roman law proves."

Then the king grew angry[163]....."You think by subtlety and craft to overturn the strength of the royal prerogatives which God has given me. Now I charge you, by the fidelity and the oath by which you are bound to me, that you submit yourself to correction for these presumptuous words against my royal crown and dignity. And I further beseech the archbishops and bishops here present to do me justice upon you, agreeably to the rights of the royal crown granted to me by the Most High. It is clear that you are acting in opposition to my regal dignities, and labouring to deprive me of the privileges due to me by antient right." These words excited such murmurs against the bishop as were with difficulty quieted.

Whereat the king waxes wroth.

[163] "Several words, both here and below, have been most carefully erased from the MS.," says the editor of the *Lat. ed.*, who thinks they consisted of "some gross Norman oath." The word *papa*, too, is, in general, carefully blotted out.

The practice of profane swearing, indulged in by great men at this period, is thus referred to by Giraldus Cambrensis: "There are some princes who, at every word, employ an enormous oath, foolishly and rashly presuming to swear by the death of God, by his eyes, his feet, and his teeth, ... but while they so irreverently strive to tear their God limb from limb, they plainly show that they neither fear nor reverence the excellency of the divine majesty with any worthy or becoming devotion." (*De Instruct. Princip.* pp. 169-70.)

The chancellor then said: "It should not escape your memory, venerable bishop, whose excellency[164] . . . . you offend against our lord the king, to whom you have certainly made an oath of fidelity. Your prudence must therefore be careful." So the bishop, seeing himself thus encompassed, and perceiving that the king was offended, as soon as silence could be obtained, continued his discourse thus: "My lord," said he, "if anything I have said has been offensive to your royal majesty, I do declare, before the God of heaven and your royal dignity, that I intended nothing contrary to you or your excellency by craft or subtlety. I have ever earnestly desired your protection, extolled your goodness, magnified your greatness, and loved you with a heartfelt affection, as my most dear sovereign. I pray your royal eminence, therefore, neither to suspect any evil in me, nor to credit too readily any one who may suggest it of me. I have no desire in the least to diminish your authority, which I have always loved and magnified with all my might. I have said all, therefore, for your highness's honour and glory."

Thomas à Becket cautions the bishop.

"Far from me and mine," said the king, "be such honour and such glory; and I would that such wickedness were abolished as that by which you desire, as all may see, by soft and deceitful words to annul those things which, through God's favour, I enjoy by hereditary right from the kings my predecessors." To this the bishop replied: "I thought, my lord, that what I have advanced by your permission and that of all present, had been uttered, as I intended it, with affection; but since what I began with pleases you not, I will pass it by, and state my case in a few words:—

And the bishop apologises.

"Having been presented, by the most pious King Stephen, to the see of Chichester, I proceeded to Canterbury, as was

[164] An erasure in the MS.

canonical, to be consecrated by the venerable Theobald, archbishop of that place. Thither came also the abbot of Battel, knowing it to be proper and canonical for him to attend the consecration of his diocesan. He did therefore what he ought. When I returned to my see at Chichester, the abbot proceeded thither, and was with others joyfully received, and I was by him placed in my proper seat, as is everywhere the practice. The same year, being summoned to Chichester, he again went thither, and being again well received, took his seat with the rest in the synod, to hear its precepts and its customs. Not long after this, going round my diocese, I came to Battel, and was honourably received in procession by the abbot and all the brethren, as the proper and special bishop of that place. And then, entering the chapter-house with him, I disseminated the word of God to the brethren, as to sons, and as was becoming in a father, confirmed them in the Catholic faith. From thence he brought me to the hospitium, and provided what was necessary, as was due to his bishop, and at my departure presented me with gifts." Hereupon Henry of Essex, the king's tribune said: "The kindnesses he did you, out of pure goodwill, have met with a very ungracious return. You now wish to repay evil for the good services he showed you. And I hope that in future every one who gets such thanks will withhold his hospitality from you!" But the bishop went on: "From that time, my most dear lord, I know not by whose advice, he has withdrawn himself from the synod, refusing to attend personally when summoned, but sending the prior with certain brethren of his abbey instead. For the love I bore him, and apprehensive of nothing amiss, I suffered this neglect once, again, and even a third time, in a spirit of kindness. All these things, however, as you have heard, were carried on peaceably between us, until the death of the bishop of London, when the abbot, influenced by the spirit of envy or pride, could no longer regard me with favourable eyes.

Interrupted by Henry of Essex.

The bishop goes on.

For he thought, as I believe, that I should by some means injure him in that business,[165] which he was utterly unable to prove." To this Henry of Essex replied: "If you speak of the bishopric of London, it is very well known to all, that the abbot was at no time willing, in his desire for that honour, to do anything simoniacally, either against God or against that holy order. Because if, like some, he had desired to obtain the see by means of money, he would for certain have been elevated to it in preference to all other aspirants." To this Richard de Lucy added: "Far be it from him to obtain so great and so sacred a dignity, by such means. For we knew no person living whom we had occasion to fear in this business."

Some expressed dissatisfaction at this, and the bishop, gaining breath, pursued his unfinished speech. "From that time, my lord, the matter was placed in doubt between us, and neither of us wished to forego what we had begun. Then certain persons came and informed me why the abbot would not attend the synod; namely, because he relied upon the charters and privileges of his Abbey, and was so lifted up by them, that he declared he ought by no means to pay canonical obedience to the church of Chichester. Upon learning this, I was unwilling that my church should, in my time, suffer in its antient and rightful dignities, and therefore I interdicted the abbot, with a certain other person of my diocese, who had refused to attend our synod when duly summoned, with this condition, that if, within the space of forty days, he did not come to make satisfaction, he should be suspended from office. That other person humbly sought pardon, and obtained it;[166] but the abbot still remained obstinate. Hearing of what I had done, he went to King Stephen, and made complaint. Then

[165] From this it would appear that Abbot Walter had been an aspirant for the see of London.

[166] Who "that other person" was does not appear. It may have been the head of the royal free collegiate chapel of S. Mary within the castle of Hastings, between the canons of which and the bishops of Chichester a lengthened dispute, similar to that which occupies *too many* of these pages, was carried on. So lately as 33 Edw. I, we find the constable of

the king sent to me a clerk of his, named Robert de Cornwall, commanding me to appear before him at London, on the octaves of S. Andrew, when the abbot would also attend, and there, with the advice of the archbishop of Canterbury, and of his barons, he would bring about a reconciliation. On the appointed day I was with the king; but neither the abbot, nor any one on his behalf, appeared against me, as all then present well knew. So I returned home, the abbot still remaining contumacious. After the expiration of that year, in solemn synod, and according to the canonical statutes, I excommunicated him. The abbot conveyed intelligence of this transaction to the archbishop, and the primate, at his request, commanded me by letter to relax the sentence, until we could have an opportunity of meeting, when he would do justice between us. Out of respect, therefore, for my lord the archbishop, I did temporarily relax the sentence. Then said Henry of Essex: "If this be true, it is certain that you did that after King Stephen's death, which you would not have dared do in his lifetime. It would not have been expedient for you. What our lord [the king] is now about to do, belongs to *his* prerogative."

Henry of Essex again interrupts.

The bishop proceeded: "Thus the matter went on between us, neither did the abbot at any time come forward to make satisfaction. After our Lord Jesus Christ had placed you, my lord, upon the throne of this realm—an event which was peculiarly agreeable to me—the abbot did not pay due respect either to me his diocesan, or to my church of Chichester; nay, he set me at nought by avoiding my presence, and by defaming me everywhere with scandalous words as much as he possibly could. He also got his charters confirmed anew by

Hastings Castle excommunicated for refusing the archbishop of Canterbury admittance, in order to *visit* the chapel as metropolitan. The archbishop succeeded in intruding upon the canons a dean of his own nomination; but on the 20th April, in that year, the king summoned the primate before him, to answer these high contempts against his crown and dignity; and on the 9th October following, the warden of the Cinque Ports received orders to remove the new dean.

your seal. It came to my ears that those charters contained some things opposed to the dignities of my church of Chichester, and to those of the church of Canterbury, the mother church of all England. This I took care to communicate to the archbishop, as one to whom we have all undoubtedly made profession, and to whom and his church we owe the fullest obedience. The archbishop therefore applied to you, and I likewise, on behalf of myself and my church of Chichester, laid a complaint before you. Your clemency then commanded that I and the abbot should meet before the archbishop, with your chancellor, the Lord Thomas, in order that the charter might be read, and that those things which required correction in it (namely, those which were opposed to the dignities of the churches of Chichester and Canterbury) being amended, at the direction of the archbishop, every one might have justice done him. We met there; and the abbot's charter being read to those assembled, those things which were opposed to the dignities of the churches of Canterbury and Chichester were, upon due consideration, perceived to be frivolous. The abbot angrily attacked me with many and gross insults; and not then only, for this very year, on coming to Chichester, he entered our chapter-house with the greatest arrogance, and in many—nay, I might say innumerable—ways set me at nought, threatening and despising me in the presence of my chapter. In this manner, my dearest lord, things have been carried on between us up to this time. I therefore beseech your excellency to order the antient and rightful institutions of the canons to be confirmed between us in all things, and to decide these matters in accordance with the customs of the church."

The king. To this the king replied: "We have here heard a statement very much to be wondered at, namely, that you, my lord bishop, esteem as frivolous the charters of the kings my predecessors, confirmed by the lawful authority of the crown of England, and by the testimony of

eminent men! Far be it from me—far be it from the excellency of my kingdom, that what upon mature consideration has been decreed by me, with the advice of my archbishops, bishops, and barons, should be condemned by you or any like you!"

The abbot.

The abbot next spoke: "From antient times, in the reign of the most noble King William, all these things were settled, as we have heard from the elder brethren of our Abbey, before that king, with Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury, and many other bishops. Stigand, bishop of Chichester, was present on the occasion, though he was afterwards the first to annoy Gausbert, abbot of Battel, upon this subject, by summoning him to attend his synod at Chichester, and to obey all episcopal mandates. And I have here that king's own charter, confirmed by the attestation of Archbishop Lanfranc, and some other bishops, including that of Stigand himself." So saying, he handed the charter to the king, and one of the clerks, at his bidding, read it aloud. These, among other things, were contained in the charter: that the Abbey of Battel should be entirely free from the authority of the bishop of Chichester, and that the abbot should not be summoned to his synod, although he might go thither on any account, voluntarily. When the reading was concluded, the bishop declared that he had never before seen or heard that charter, nor would the abbot on any account exhibit it to him. The abbot was saying something in reply, when the king ordered him to be silent. "For," said he, "from henceforth it is not for your prudence to make good your claim; but it becomes *me* to defend it, as my own royal prerogative. In the meantime, therefore, let your brothership[167] be silent, while I determine this affair by sound reason and royal protection, as

produces the Conqueror's charter.

The king's remark upon it.

[167] "Quapropter *vestra* interim sileat *fraternitas*." The styles of address employed in this work are very singular and varied; the most ordinary are "your highness," "your clemency," "your prudence," and "your excellency."

if it were my own. The decision of the business is my concern." Many remarks were made on both sides; but at length, silence being imposed, Richard de Lucy arose, and earnestly entreated the king that he would permit his brother, the abbot, to have some private conference with his friends, as to his reply upon these things. This being assented to by the king, he called Roger, archbishop of York, Thomas, the king's chancellor, John, treasurer of the church of York, Robert, earl of Leicester, Patrick, earl of Salisbury, Henry of Essex, Reginald de Warenne, Warine Fitz-Gerald, and some other barons, and a considerable number of knights, together with his brother the abbot, and all who adhered to him, and retiring with them to another part of the chapter-house, began to ask their opinion. The king in the meantime went into the church to hear mass, and this being over, returned to his seat. Richard de Lucy, with the abbot and their friends, having discussed the subject, also returned; and the speech in reply devolving upon Thomas, the king's chancellor, great attention was paid by all, while that eminent personage delivered the following eloquent oration:—

By the king's permission, the abbot consults with the archbishop, the chancellor, and others.

"Reverend father Hilary: we have determined, upon the safe ground of equity, and at the expressed wishes of the nobles present, to say a few things, recapitulating the train of circumstances in the suit so long maintained by you. But first, the venerable abbot Walter returns your prudence his best acknowledgments, because for the favours he has shown you, you have so highly commended him, in this great and magnificent court, and in the presence of so many noble persons; and he confesses that had he, in those times, hoped for such very high praise before so great and so excellent an assembly, he would certainly have augmented the favours which should call it forth. But then again, he feels deeply grieved that, after the kindness he evinced towards you, with, as all must see, the

The judgment, as delivered by the chancellor, Thomas à Becket.

best intentions, you exert yourself in every possible way to repay that kindness by slanderous words. He now, therefore, replies to the charges made against him, as follows :—

"Admitting that he attended your consecration at Canterbury—that he afterwards, on meeting you at Chichester, conducted you to your seat—and that he has subsequently sat with others in your synod; still, by the privilege of his Abbey of Battel, it was matter of choice with him whether he did either of those things or not, as appears by the charter just now read. Neither was he bound by any obligation from you to perform those things in ecclesiastical strictness, inasmuch as he was not subject to your authority; for indeed the charter before mentioned proves that he is entirely independent of you. He calls our lord the archbishop of Canterbury to witness that he did it at *his* command."

On this the archbishop said: "It is true that by my mandate he did these things."

The chancellor continued: "If, in going round your diocese, according to custom, you came to Battel, and were there received in procession by the brethren of that place, in the presence of the abbot; and if, on entering the chapter-house there, you preached the word of God, why, it is well known and customary that, in all the churches, both here and beyond the seas, such a tribute of respect and love should be offered to any bishop, be he an Irishman, a Spaniard,[168] or what you will, *freely*, and without any consequent exaction of custom.

"As to the see of London, the abbot assures your prudence, that neither by countenance, by act, or by connivance, has he in that matter reflected upon you with an injurious intention. For in the management of that affair he did not suspect you of any evil design against him. But as it is said in a certain place, "The guilty person thinks all things opposed to him," —so you, perhaps, having some compunctions of conscience for

[168] "Episcopo Hiberniensi vel etiam Hispalensi." Hispalensis, "of Seville."

your misconduct, imagined that he, though maintaining a consistent course, could not regard you with a favourable eye.

"You insinuate that, after you had interdicted him for not regarding your summons to Chichester, and King Stephen on this account had by Robert de Cornwall, his clerk, fixed a certain day for you to appear before him, with a view to the adjustment of these differences, that no one met you there on the part of the abbot, and that you returned as you came. But the abbot, on the contrary, replies, that on the appointed day he attended at the king's chapel near the tower of London, before King Stephen, when the bishops of Winchester and Ely were present, with the abbot of Westminster and certain barons. And there the charters and writings of the Abbey were read by the venerable bishop of Winchester, the king remarking, at the same time, that he would always be a protector of his royal chapel, namely, his abbacy of Battel, and giving orders that you should meet to settle all things between you—and so he went his way.

"As to the synod, he could not be compelled to attend it by any summons, though he was free to do so if he thought fit; which is proved by his charter read here to-day, as well as by the custom of antiquity up to this time preserved by his Abbey. In short, to go or not to go to the synod, is proved to be entirely at his option. For it is clear to all, that he is in nowise subject to your authority, but perfectly independent of you.

"You say he has been excommunicated by you. This to him and all his friends appears marvellous, because it is not supposed that you had the presumption to do anything of the kind against him during the time of King Stephen. And as to what you may have done in the time of our lord, the present king, he considers it nothing; especially since, in the first year of his reign, when you both heard mass in the presence of the king himself and many others, in the abbey of

S. Peter at Westminster, and the service had been performed as far as the words *Pax Domini*, you having, as the custom is, received the pax from the priest, and carried it to the king, afterwards gave the abbot, thus joined in a close relationship to you, the kiss of peace, not as to one excommunicated, but as to a son of the church, and a Christian man."

The bishop's apology for a former lapsus.

To this the bishop answered: "If in this, either through absence of mind, or through being engaged with other thoughts, as sometimes happens, I have done wrong, I will confess my fault to my archbishop, and purge myself from it by any penance he may please to inflict."

Thomas à Becket continues.

The chancellor continued: "In the charters of his Abbey of Battel, which is plainly the king's own chapel, nothing new is inserted which is opposed either to the dignities of the church of Canterbury, or to those of your own church of Chichester, as must also be very clear to all. The Abbey built by the noble King William was endowed with many great and glorious privileges by the king himself, in accordance with the prerogative of the English crown, and these were confirmed by Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury, and by other bishops, abbots, and barons; which privileges the Abbey is proved to have held to this day by inviolable right. These the abbot has sought to retain, by the command of our lord the king, in the presence of the archbishop of Canterbury, not for the purpose of setting you at nought, but with the intention of defending by sound reason, as royal rights, things which you have been pleased in our hearing to call frivolous.

"You say that this year he proudly entered, during your absence, your chapter-house at Chichester, and there, in various ways, slighted you. But he clearly shows that he went thither, not proudly, as you assert, but peaceably and by compulsion. For the truth is, two of your deans—those of Lewes and Hastings—with five priests as witnesses, going

to Battel at the beginning of Lent, delivered to the abbot letters of Pope Adrian from you, summoning him in the pope's name to attend at Chichester on the Sunday called *Lætare Jerusalem*, there to hear the pope's orders. As the king was at that time beyond the seas, he could not go to him; he therefore took the advice of the archbishop of Canterbury and that of other friends, went to Chichester on the day appointed, and entered the chapter-house to hear the pope's commands, the two deans and the five priests before mentioned being present. Then the two deans repeated what they had said to the abbot at Battel, and the answers the abbot had returned. There, too, your clerks, in contravention of the royal dignity, required certain things of him. The abbot prayed a respite, till he could take the advice and pleasure of our lord the king upon the business; but they refused, and he could not obtain it. They declared, moreover, that these were your orders, neither could they act in opposition to them. Thus the abbot departed, and by his messenger signified to the king how matters stood; and our lord the king has fixed this day for you both upon the business."

Then the king, looking at the bishop with a changed countenance, said: "Were the letters of which mention is now made of your procuring? By the fidelity and oath you owe me, I charge you answer me truly!" The bishop replied: "By my fidelity, and by the oath I have sworn to you as my sovereign, your excellency shall know, that these letters were procured neither by myself nor by any other person with my consent. But the abbot, lately sending one of his clerks to Rome, greatly defamed me at the Roman court. As I was known, however, to all that court, and as my character and conduct were not unknown to all the residents there, it was impossible for him to injure me. It turned out, then, that he procured those letters for himself." "It seems strange, not to say astounding remarked the king, that the abbot should have been willing

The king again angry.

if the thing is really so, to have procured letters against himself and his Abbey." To this the chancellor added: "If you wish to prove that these letters were obtained by other means, and not as you say by yourself, why the abbot is here with the letters themselves in his hands. Those letters can be read. It may then be seen what their import is; and thus the truth of the thing will be manifested."

The archbishop's astonishment at the bishop's falsehood.

Now the archbishop hearing the bishop deny, in the presence of all, that the letters had been procured by him, and knowing how matters really stood, and that they had been so procured, marked himself with the sign of the cross, in token of astonishment. Then said the chancellor: "Our lord the king is determined not only to know the truth, as it respects these letters, but also if you know of any other letters, or know any person to have obtained letters through you, which now or hereafter might be injurious to the abbot or to his Abbey of Battel, that you shall now produce them before us." But the bishop affirmed upon oath that he had no letters, and that no person through him had any, which would then or afterwards injure the abbot or the Abbey of Battel. At this all were astounded.

All these transactions took place before our lord the king, whom the archbishop of Canterbury now addressed thus: "Will your excellency command us to retire, and to do what is necessary to be done, and to determine these matters according to the legal method of ecclesiastical custom?" "Nay," said the king, "I will order you to determine them in my presence, and after due deliberation, *I* shall decide." So saying, he arose, and retired to the cemetery of the monks—the rest, except the bishop and the abbot, accompanying him. After some consultation, the king sent for the bishop, who came and sat down with the others; and after much discussion—the affair being brought to a conclusion—the king commanded

The archbishop.

The king.

Henry of Essex to bring in the abbot and his monks. The abbot took his seat, and the bishop, at the king's signal, spoke as follows:—

The bishop disclaims all authority over the abbot.

"Most excellent king: I, bishop of the church of Chichester, do entirely liberate and quit-claim the Abbey of Battel, as your own royal chapel—in and upon which I neither have nor ought to have any authority—from all the claims and challenges which I have hitherto maintained. In like manner also, I absolve the abbot, as one upon whom I have unjustly imposed the chain of excommunication, which I neither could do, nor ought to have done; I protest that, in consideration of his elevated dignity and that of his Abbey, I ought not to demand anything of him except his good will; and I declare that from this day, for ever, he is free from all episcopal exactions and customs."

The king said: "It is to be understood, then, that you have done and offered this, not by compulsion, but of your own free will?" The bishop replied: "It is true that I have done and offered this of my own accord, induced by considerations of justice." Then said the archbishop:

The archbishop intercedes,

"My lord king; these affairs being now justly settled, we all entreat your mercy on behalf of the bishop, if he should seem unadvisedly to have spoken anything against the dignity of your highness. May your clemency deign to indulge our request, by giving him the kiss of peace." To which the king replied: "I forgive him all; and, influenced by your prayers and his love, I will give him the kiss of peace, not once only, but a hundred times." Then rising, he embraced the bishop, and kissed him. The archbishop: "Now, then, may the bishop and the abbot, as friends, by kissing each other, maintain for ever, by your confirmation, a covenant of peace." Then the bishop and the abbot, at the king's command, kissed each other, the archbishop making the sign of the cross upon them;

and all parties are reconciled.

and thus were they made friends, and joined in a covenant of peace and affection. The archbishop added again: "One thing still remains to be done—let Richard de Lucy, the abbot's venerable brother, be joined in this compact of peace and love." And immediately, at the king's command, that man, ever remarkable for the virtues of prudence and modesty, forgetting all differences, gave the bishop the kiss of peace. These things being satisfactorily settled, all rejoiced together at the reconciliation thus effected; and the king retired to attend to other business. The abbot with the king's leave returned home, giving thanks with his friends to our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the blessed Mary his mother, as well as to Christ's confessor, the blessed S. Martin, who never deserts those that hope in him; and rejoicing with great joy that he had obtained his desire.

This suit, so long maintained, was finally concluded at Colchester, on the fifth of the calends of June, before our lord king Henry the Second, in the presence of—

THEOBALD, archbishop of Canterbury,

ROGER, archbishop of York,	RICHARD, bishop of London,
ROBERT, bishop of Lincoln,	ROBERT, bishop of Exeter,
SILVESTER, abbot of S. Augustine of Canterbury,	GAUSFRID, abbot of Holme,
ROBERT, earl of Leicester,	THOMAS, the king's chancellor,
HENRY of Essex, the king's tribune,	PATRICK, earl of Salisbury,
	RICHARD DE LUCY,
	REGINALD DE WARENNE, and

WARIN FITZGERALD.

There were present, also, Hilary, bishop of Chichester, and the before-named Walter the abbot, and many others, both clergy and laics.

Abbot Walter's solicitude in securing the Abbey's rights.

These things are sufficient to show what constant solicitude the venerable abbot Walter exercised in the defence of the freedom of the Abbey intrusted to him. What vexations of body, what anxieties of mind, and what expenditure of money, it cost him, till the conclusion of the proceedings, no man can well say. But

although he suffered much from fatigue, and although his corporeal frame was very weakly, yet he neither regarded his own debility, nor any amount of expenditure, in his unvarying watchfulness for the advantage and advancement of his Abbey. But having now secured the attainment of his wishes, in the preserved integrity of its freedom and dignity, and having nothing to fear on that account, he next turned his attention to the recovery by ecclesiastical right of what had been lost in evil times. And since we have determined to transmit to posterity certain transactions by way of examples, in order that the narration may be clearer, it will be necessary briefly to recur to times we have already passed over.

Prosecutes his claim to Barnhorn.

While as yet the noble King Henry, son of the most noble King William of happy memory, the acquirer of the English monarchy, and founder of the Abbey of S. Martin of Battel, held the government of the English, Abbot Ralph, who then presided over Battel Abbey, purchased of one Ingelram, surnamed Becchenridere,[169] a tenant of Withelard de Baillol, with his consent (as we have above written) three wists of land at Barnhorn. This Withelard also freely added, of his own, a certain parcel of land in the marsh adjoining the aforesaid three wists, and as much procured from Ingelram, his tenant, as he himself granted of his own proper gift, to the Abbey of Battel. And that this land should remain entirely free from all services, and from the claims of all men to the Abbey, was confirmed by the noble King Henry, and by Henry, earl of Eu, the lord of the said Withelard.[170] But when the land had been improved,

[169] This is a singular surname, and appears to be derived from the two Anglo-Saxon words *becun*, a beacon, and *ridere*, a rider: a "beacon-rider." It may probably be explained by the cognate name, hobiler or hobler. "A hobiler was a person who, by the tenure of his lands, was obliged to keep a hobby or light horse, to maintain a watch by the side of a beacon, and to alarm the country in case of the enemy's approach in the day-time, when the fire of the beacons would not be discernible from a distance." (*English Surnames*, vol. i, p. 117, edit. 1849.)

[170] This is one of several instances occurring in the Chronicle, in which the gifts of feudal

at much labour and expense, with houses and cultivation, and a mill had been built in the best marsh, and much advantage was anticipated from it, especially as it was but five miles from the Abbey—Abbot Ralph dying, the lord of the manor often applied to Abbot Warner, his successor, demanding many things from him as if in recompense of favours conferred. But at length the abbot grew weary of his exactions, and thinking that evil consequences might result, especially as the lord of the manor frequently demanded what seemed to exceed the profits of the land, he entirely withheld his hand, and boldly declared that he would not any longer submit to his vexations and exactions. This exactor, perceiving that he could not accomplish his purpose, withdrew from the Abbey of Battel the aforesaid possession, as if it were his own, and transferred it upon bond, for money, to one Siward of Hastings, surnamed Fitz-Sigar. By this act of violence the Abbey was robbed not only of the land itself, but also of its outlay, and of all that was existing upon it. The abbot and his agents bore this injury very unwillingly, and instituted great and various complaints; but King Henry dying beyond the seas, they were unable to get any restitution of their rights. King Stephen succeeded; but in his time justice was little regarded, and he who was strongest got most; and thus, in the meantime, every one holding, as if by right, what he had seized upon, the Abbey of S. Martin of Battel was unable to recover not only

dependents receive the confirmation of their lords; for in the most sacred donations it was necessary to obtain the consent of those superiors: this was one of the curses of Feudalism.

It may be interesting to state, that so lately as the year 1617, this unnatural claim of one man upon the rights and liberties of his fellow-man was not entirely extinct in this part of England; for John Norden, in his unpublished 'Survey of certain Crown Manors,' made in that year, speaking of the manor of Falmer, near Lewes, says: "There are three *bondmen of bloude* belonginge unto this manor, never known to be anie way mannumissed, namely, Thomas Goringe, William and John Goringe. Thomas Goringe dwells at Amberley, William at Piddinghow, and John Goringe at Rottingdean. What goods they have the jurie know not. All poor men. Thomas hath the reversion of a cottage now in the tenure of William Jefferye. But mee thinkes *this kind of advantage is nowe out of season*; yet, were they men of ability, they might be, upon some consideration, infraunchized." (Vide *Notes and Queries*, i, 139.)

this tenement of Barnhorn, but many other possessions which had been violently taken away, although claims were repeatedly set up for this purpose.

Upon the death of King Stephen, the noble King Henry, the grandson of the former king of that name, succeeded him, and renewed ancestral times. And when Warner resigned the abbacy, the venerable Abbot Walter, having succeeded him, obtained the favour of the king, and laid a complaint before him, concerning the above-mentioned tenement of Barnhorn. The king, therefore, at the instance of the abbot, commanded John, then earl of Eu, by his letters, that he should hold the full direction in the said tenement for the abbot, or in default of this, that the sheriff of Sussex should do so, that the king might hear no more clamour concerning it.

But Gilbert de Baillol, who was then lord of the manor, though in many ways expostulated with and sought after by the earl, the sheriff, the abbot, and their agents, for a long time evaded the pleadings, and dissembled in various ways, in order to avoid the conflict. But although much time was thus spent in useless labour, the abbot would not desist from his purpose. At length, through repeated applications to the king, sometimes in person, and sometimes by his friends, he obtained leave to have the cause traversed to the royal court. But our lord the king, at one time going over to Normandy, and at another returning to England, attending to his own affairs—although the cause was long sifted before the justices who presided in the court as the king's deputies, and although the king, by his mandates and writs, very often required full justice to be done to the abbot, yet it was impossible to bring the matter to a satisfactory conclusion. At length, however, the king remained for some time at Clarendon; and after many subterfuges of the opposite party, after many dissimulations, and after much fatigue on the part of the abbot and his friends, it was directed by royal warrant that, all pretences laid aside, both parties, on a

Ultimately the king appoints a hearing at Clarendon.

specified day, should attend the royal tribunal at that place. No room for excuse being left, both parties attended, our lord the king sitting as judge. Osmund, a monk of the Abbey, and Peter de Criol, a knight, were present, and stated the whole case from the beginning, proving how this land of Barnhorn had been acquired by the Abbey of S. Martin of Battel, partly by gift and partly by purchase, and how it had afterwards been taken away; and showing how much time had been consumed in the suit since the commencement of proceedings. All this they explained in order before the king and his assessors; complaining, at the same time, of the long and expensive delay, and the frequent and useless trouble of the abbot and his friends. When, therefore, there was now no reason by which this recital of the prosecution could be fairly denied, by the king's permission the deeds of purchase and gift and the charters of confirmation were read aloud, the royal court bearing witness in all things. On the other side there was little to be said in reply; but Gilbert de Baillol, lest he should appear to be destitute of any grounds of opposition, acknowledged that he had heard the deeds of his predecessors, but that he could see no seals appended to them in evidence of their authenticity. The noble and discreet Richard de Lucy, the abbot's brother, and then the king's chief justice, looking at him, inquired whether he himself possessed a seal, and receiving a reply in the affirmative, that illustrious man, smiling contemptuously, said: "In old times it was not the custom for every small knight [171] to have a seal, which befits only kings and great men; neither in bygone days did malice, as now, make people lawyers and quibblers." Gilbert next challenged the confirmation of King Henry the elder, declaring that the abbot and monks sought to persuade the king, not for justice, but for their own advantage. But

The abbot's plea.

Richard de Lucy's sneer at the seal of the opponent.

[171] Militulus.

the king, taking the charter and seal of his grandfather, King Henry, into his own hands, turned round to Gilbert and said: "By the eyes of God, if you can prove this charter false, you will put a thousand pounds into my pocket in England!" Gilbert said little or nothing to this; and the king uttered this remarkable speech: "If," quoth he, "the monks, by a charter and confirmation like this, were able to show that they have a claim upon this very palace of Clarendon, in which I do greatly delight, I could not with justice refuse to give it up entirely to them." Then turning to the abbot and his friends: "Go," said he, "and advise together, and see if there be anything upon which you are more willing to rely than upon this charter. At present, however, I do not think you will seek any other proof." So the abbot and his friends went out and talked together, and being assured from the king's last words—"I think you will seek no other proof"—that the charter was a sufficient evidence, they returned into the presence of the king and his assessors, stating that they desired no other proof—that they demanded neither more nor less than the charter demanded—and that they would abide by the decision of the royal court thereupon. The other side having nothing to say, since they neither dared nor were able to object to the charter, or to prove it false, it was adjudged, by the unanimous consent of the whole royal court, that all that the evidence of the charter required should be restored to the Abbey of S. Martin of Battel. Gilbert de Baillol, finding himself deprived of the tenement of Barnhorn, begged, in the hearing of all present, that the chattels of the knight who held the tenement of him might be given up to him. To this request the king answered: "You could not more plainly confess, than by asking this, that you have no right to the land." And the king directed the chattels to be given up to them. And at the king's orders, letters, sealed with the royal seal, were speedily directed to the four knights,

The king's opinion of the validity of the abbot's charter.

The court decides against Baillol.

who, at that time, by his appointment, held the sheriffdom[172] of Sussex, that without delay they should restore to the Abbey of S. Martin of Battel what it had recovered in the royal court, namely, three wists of land in Barnhorn, with the whole marsh, and a certain tithe of Buckholt, as fully and wholly, and as freely and quietly to be held, as it had been in the days of King Henry, his grandfather, upon the evidence of his charter, the land itself being first ascertained, and its bounds walked by twelve faithful men of those parts, who knew its boundaries, and who should speak the truth thereupon upon oath. On receipt of this precept, Richard de Chaaines, one of the four knights above mentioned, went, on behalf of himself and his colleagues, to the said tenement, and having fixed its bounds, upon the oaths both of the tenants and of those who resided in the vicinity, duly invested the abbot and convent of S. Martin of Battel with it.

A survey made.

The land being thus recovered, though not without great labour and trouble, and all being, as it was thought, now settled; and when all claims were so removed that there was no suspicion of evil for the future, one Robert of Icklesham, with his mother Matilda, suddenly entered upon a certain meadow lying within the circuit of the tenement, and attempted to carry off the hay by force; but the abbot, being forewarned, collected a number of workmen, and repelled force by force; and having beaten the other party, housed the hay for himself.

Dispute with Robert de Icklesham,

Robert, therefore, went to the royal court, and, in the king's absence, laid a complaint before his justiciars, that the men, who, on their oath, ought to have determined the bounds of Barnhorn, had seized more than was just, and thus, while he had not been a party to the suit, his land had been taken away from him. At his instance, therefore, the abbot, with the men

[172] "Ad quatuor milites qui tunc . . . . vicecomitatum Suthsexiae regebant.

who had surveyed the land, was driven into court to make satisfaction upon the injury which he alleged against them. Nor did the stout-minded abbot—though weak in body—hesitate to appear on the day appointed before the justiciars at Winchester, bringing with him the men who had surveyed the tenement of Barnhorn and fixed its bounds. Robert de Icklesham came forward, and made his complaint concerning the land, which he alleged had been craftily taken away. But the twelve men withstood him to his face, prepared again to swear, that, lest they might transgress their oath, they had included in their circuit rather less than more than was just. Upon this Robert was adjudged by all guilty of a false plea, and delivered over to the king's mercy. Finding this the case, he privately withdrew, and took to flight, and neither forgetting his spurs nor sparing his horse, made no stay till he arrived trembling at his home. The abbot also, with his friends, returned home rejoicing, and held the tenement as long as he lived without further interruption. We have said enough upon this subject, and will now recount some other trials which he underwent.

who being found guilty of a false plea,

gallops home.

There was in his times one Alan de Neville, the chief of the king's foresters,[173] who, by the power granted him, most maliciously vexed various provinces of England with innumerable and unusual prosecutions. And, as he neither feared God nor regarded man, he spared neither ecclesiastical dignities nor secular. While the king was abroad, this Alan, among other deeds of iniquity, entered

Tyranny of Alan de Neville

[173] The office of chief forester to the king seems to have been hereditary in the family of Neville. (1) Alan de Neville here mentioned was probably father of (2) Lord William de Neville, who held the office under Hen. II and Ric. I, and whose son, (3) Lord Hugh de Neville, had a son, (4) Lord John de Neville. The last two held it temp. John and Hen. III. (5) Hugh de Neville, 8 Hen. III, was principal warden and chief justice of all the king's forests. In 13 same reign he had a grant from the king to hunt and take the *hare*, *fox*, and *cat* throughout the royal forests. (6) John de Neville, son and heir of Hugh, succeeded as justice of the forests. For his disgrace and death see Mat. Paris. (Vide *Rowland's Family of Neville*, fol. 1830.)

into those manors of the Abbey of S. Martin of Battel which were situated within the precincts of the forests, and with force there demanded money for *essarts*,[174] viz., from the manor of Bromham twenty shillings, from its member, Anestia, half a mark, and as much from the manor of Bricthwoldintune. This money was collected by the sheriffs of counties, and carried to the king's exchequer, where it was received by the treasurers, and laid up in the king's treasury. The abbot hearing of this transaction, sent one of his monks with his charters of privileges to the exchequer, to make complaint before the justiciars concerning this unusual and unjust demand. The monk, appearing there before Robert, earl of Leicester, and Richard de Lucy (who then held the chief authority in the administration of justice in the room of the king), and other barons of the exchequer, made complaint upon the injury sustained, stated the whole case, produced the charters, and sought restitution of what had been taken away. The liberties of the Abbey having been heard from the testimony of the charters, the said money, now long deposited in the treasury, was, by the unanimous judgment of all, withdrawn, and restored to the monk before all present; the tallies were broken, and all entries of that money were erased from the rolls. The monk returned home, related to the abbot the details of the transaction, and left the money at his disposal; and the abbot sent it to the respective manors, to be restored to the tenants from whom it had been exacted.

overturned.

Now this Alan, as long as he lived, enriched the king, though he ceased not from vexing both the clergy and the laity. Thus, to please an earthly monarch, he was not afraid to offend the King of Heaven. But how much gratitude he obtained from the king whom he was thus careful to ingratiate, the sequel proved. When he was brought near his end, the brethren of a certain monastery, desiring, as

His character,

[174] "*Pro exartis*," i. e. for lands cleared of wood and brought into cultivation.

it seems, a portion of his substance for their house, went to the king, beseeching him to allow them to take his body and bury it with them. The king evinced his regard for him in these terms: "I," quoth he, "will have his wealth, but you may have his carcase, and the demons of hell his soul!" [175] Behold the wretched recompense; see the miserable disposal of him and his substance! This may well be a lesson to officials of every degree of power—to mark how this man, who studied to please the king by his wicked deeds, got neither thanks nor respect thereby, while he incurred the displeasure of the King of Heaven!

and what he got for his pains.

But these things, which we have said by way of digression, because they concern the matter in hand but very little, we will pass over, and return to others in relation to that venerable personage, the Abbot Walter.

Since the Abbey of S. Martin of Battel (as well as many other churches throughout England) was, during the unfavourable reign of King Stephen, in various ways despoiled of its rights, which, when peaceable times returned, under the noble King Henry the Second, were recovered by the carefulness of this abbot—it is necessary to relate, briefly and summarily, everything, and particularly the just possession, and afterwards the unrighteous spoliation; frequently recurring to bygone times, that the mode by which the rights were recovered may be the more clearly shown.

It has been mentioned heretofore, that King William, son of the noble King William, the acquirer of England and founder of the Abbey of Battel, was present at the dedication of that Abbey, and that he enriched it with certain churches in his royal manors in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex, so that at

[175] The king's speech.—*An Impromptu:*

"You may have, if so you please,
The carcase of Alan de Neville;
But his substance I shall seize,
And his soul may go to the D—l!"

the decease of the parsons who had been instituted to them, in future both the parsonages and the profits arising from them should belong perpetually to the Abbey of Battel. These parsons for the most part survived till the troublous times under King Stephen; and some proprietors to whom the territories in which the churches were situated had been granted, exercised the right of patronage in those churches, although they had been granted in reversion by kings. Thus acting more from selfishness than from reason, they caused whom they would to be instituted, and the Abbey of S. Martin of Battel was entirely deprived of its rights: see, for the sake of example, the following case:—

Proceedings about the church of Middlehale, which Robert de Crevequeor had given to Leeds priory.

In these tempestuous days lived one Robert de Crevequeor, a very powerful man, as times then were, and of great reputation, who held a parcel of land called Middlehale by the gift of King Stephen. In his territory stood one of the churches granted to the Abbey of S. Martin of Battel by King William the Second at the dedication. The parson of this church of Middlehale dying, Robert assumed the right of patronage, and offering to God sacrifices of robbery, granted and confirmed it to the canons of Leeds.[176] Upon learning this, Abbot Walter applied first to Robert concerning this unjust invasion, and then to the canons about their violent intrusion, and demanded restitution, but could not obtain it. Now regal justice was sought, and now ecclesiastical, but by reason of abounding iniquity it could not be had at that time. But King Stephen dying, and the pacific King Henry succeeding, hostility was expelled and long-banished peace recalled. The abbot, seeing justice begin to flourish with resumed vigour, judged the time favourable for his suit, and brought the matter to a hearing, first in the royal court

[176] Leeds, co. Kent, a priory of Black Canons, founded in 1119, by Robert de Crevequeor.

and afterwards in the ecclesiastical. The canons, deserted by their patron Robert, and having no hope from that quarter, nevertheless made all the resistance in their power. But when there was no other resource, both sides appealed to the apostolical see. Pope Adrian at that time presided over the Roman church, and the cause was directed to be heard before him.

The pope refers the matter to two English bishops.

When, therefore, it had been some time pending in the Roman court, it was determined that the messengers who had been dispatched thither on the business should be sent back to England; and the cause was committed to two English bishops, Richard of London and Josceline of Salisbury, by them to be heard and determined with apostolical authority. For, although the right of the Abbey of S. Martin of Battel was sufficiently clear to the pope and the whole Roman court, as well from the living assertion of a certain clerk called Alexander, who then performed the duties of the church in question, as from the testimony of the Lord Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury, and certain others, who had noted down in writing and fortified with their seals (and transmitted the documents to Rome) what they had seen with their own eyes, heard with their own ears, and handled with their own hands, yet the pope was unwilling to pronounce a definite sentence, and handed over the cause to the decision of these bishops. The clerk Alexander returned to England, bearing the pope's mandate, and presented it to the bishops, and obtained permission to have the opposite party summoned. But how often the canons avoided the pleadings, how often they dissembled, how often, more by craft than by honourable means, they eluded the apostolical mandate, how often renewed complaints of the unsatisfactory nature of the proceedings reached the king on this side the sea, and the pope beyond it, no one can easily imagine. At length, after manifold fatigues, the forementioned judges were commanded by both apostolical

Delays.

and royal authority—all excuses being laid aside—to hear the cause, and to decide it in accordance with right and justice.

A fixed day was therefore appointed to the parties at the town of Staines, that the truth of the matter being more fully ascertained, full justice might be done to both. There was present the venerable Josceline, bishop of Salisbury; and some clerks of the venerable Richard, bishop of London, who on account of indisposition was unable to attend, were also there on behalf of their lord, to sit in judgment with my lord of Salisbury.

The parties peremptorily summoned to meet ad Staines.

The abbot did not appear in person, but sent an efficient deputy, while the other party, fearing they had very little, if any, right, neither appeared themselves, nor sent any substitute. As no further delay could be allowed, and they must needs proceed immediately to trial, the judges observing the manifest contumacy of the other side, were very determined concerning the right of the abbot and convent of Battel. Sentence was therefore given with apostolical authority, and the church of Middlehale was sequestrated and committed to the custody of the abbot, with this proviso, that, if the canons should within the space of a year commence proceedings, the abbot should resign the church into the hands of the judges. The canons, seeing themselves thus removed by a just decision from an unjust possession, abstained from strife for a time, namely, as long as King Henry and Abbot Walter lived. The judges' letters patent to the bishop of Norwich, for the induction of the abbot of Battel into the custody of the church of Middlehale having been received, and the abbot shortly gaining possession of it, he granted the church to a certain clerk, Robert, surnamed the Philosopher, by whose labour and diligence, principally, the affair had been brought to this conclusion, to hold it from the Abbey of S. Martin of Battel, on payment of a stipulated pension. And Robert held it peaceably as long as he lived;

Decision in favour of the Abbey.

nor was there, in future, any one who durst go to law with him concerning it.

The abbot proceeds to recover a pension due from the church of Trilawe,

When thus, after much labour and difficulty, matters were brought to a conclusion, the abbot became more determined and energetic in recovering other alienated rights. Thus, the church of Trilawe, which, as we have said, was one of those given to the Abbey of S. Martin of Battel by King William the Second, had been formerly held by one Roger, a priest, under a certain pension to be annually paid to the Abbey. But he, unmindful of good faith and of religion, neglected the due payment of the pension, and even sought to alienate the church itself from the authority of the Abbey. When this came to the knowledge of the abbot and convent that then were, they immediately commenced legal proceedings against him. At length, when he found himself unable to resist, and knew that he should be expelled from the possession of the church with ecclesiastical censure, he went to Battel, asked pardon for his transgression, and promised, on his oath, before a chapter of the monks, that he would never in future attempt the like. He openly declared, moreover, before all, in a full synod of his own diocese, that none but the abbot and convent of Battel had any right to the church of Trilawe, and that no one ought to be instituted to it except at their presentation. Upon this condition he obtained pardon, and still serving the said church by the favour of the abbot and convent, and faithfully paying the stipulated pension, he is understood to have remained faithful as long as he lived.

which had been usurped by the lord of the manor.

After his death, when now the pacific King Henry the Second was reigning, and the venerable Abbot Walter was governing the Abbey of Battel, a certain knight, named Haymo Peché,[177] lord of

[177] Hamon Peché (or Peccatum) was sheriff of Cambridgeshire from the 2d to the 12th year of Henry II. His grandson of the same name died in 1241, in his pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

the manor asserting his right of patronage in the church of Trilawe, granted it, without the consent of the abbot and convent of Battel, to a clerk named William de Orbec. But since it was clear to everybody, that all title to that church pertained to the abbot and monks of Battel, and as the knight knew that this clerk, upon his presentation, and without the privity of the abbot and monks, could not well procure institution from the bishop, he craftily obtained letters from the king to the bishop of Norwich, directing him to institute the clerk, upon his presentation, as lord of the manor. And this was done. But the clerk, knowing that he was not legally instituted, and regardful of the consequences, applied to Abbot Walter of Battel, and with many prayers and promises of obedience, solicited him to confirm him in the church. But he did not obtain his wish; for the abbot could not patiently endure that the Abbey committed to his care should in any manner be deprived of its rights. He therefore sought full justice for himself, first from the royal court and then from the ecclesiastical, complaining in the one of the trespass of the knight, and in the other of the intrusion of the clerk. But some time having been consumed by the dissimulations and subterfuges of the opposite party, and the abbot perceiving that damage was resulting to his suit, he obtained, through the above-mentioned Robert the Philosopher, letters from the pope to the venerable Gilbert, bishop of London, to the effect that, if it should appear to him, as judge, that the clerk had intruded into the church, he should remove him in spite of all excuses, and by apostolical authority restore the church to the abbot and monks of Battel. The clerk was summoned once and again; but not appearing, at length a day was peremptorily fixed, and he was compelled to attend at S. Paul's in London. Both parties appeared and the suit began, the bishop sitting as judge. The abbot was sustained by the evidence of truth and reason and the testimony of his charters, while the clerk

The parties appear before the bishop at S. Paul's.

opposed him with all his might, unwilling to renounce the church, notwithstanding his unlawful acquisition of it. At length the final decision devolved upon the judge, and he, having conferred upon all points with his assessors, and obtained their opinion as reason demanded, by apostolical authority utterly removed the clerk from the church of Trilawe, as an intruder, and restored it to the Abbey of Battel. The abbot then granted it to Robert the Philosopher, who held it peaceably as long as he lived, paying a certain annual pension out of it to the Abbey of S. Martin of Battel.

Sentence for the abbot.

After some time, when Robert the Philosopher was dead, the abbot granted the church of Trilawe to a clerk named Thomas, to be held of himself and his Abbey by pension. But before he had obtained full possession, the before-mentioned William de Orbec, relying upon the patronage of Haymo Peché, did not hesitate again unlawfully to seize the church. The abbot on hearing this, determined to implead, not the clerk, who by apostolical authority had already been entirely removed, but the knight Haymo, who had assumed the right of patronage. Making complaint, therefore, of these interferences in the royal court, before the magnates who performed the functions of our lord the king, he accused Haymo himself, as the author of this violent deprivation.

The claim further disturbed.

A day was fixed by royal authority on which both Haymo and the abbot should attend at London, the one to make his charge, the other to reply to it. At the appointed day and place, the abbot, with his friends, appeared. Haymo, however, did not attend, but sent one to excuse him, feigning that he could not appear on account of illness. But those who presided over the royal court, taking it amiss that the abbot should be put to such useless trouble, and that the other side should act in this dishonourable manner, adjudged that the whole right of the church of Trilawe

The parties summoned to London;

should be sequestrated into the king's hands. They afterwards determined to fix another day at Northampton, that Haymo coming thither, might publicly show what right he claimed in the church. But the abbot, either unable or unwilling to attend at the fixed time and place, sent one of his monks, named Osmund, who was well acquainted with the business, as his substitute, to produce the testimony of his charters. Haymo Peché, likewise, did not appear in person, but sent Gaufrid, his son, to excuse his absence, and for the future to act on his behalf. When the parties were met, the monk explained before the presidents the rights of his Abbey, both orally and by what was recited in the charters, and complained of the injury sustained. But when it was expected that something would be objected on the other side, Gaufrid, suddenly, on behalf of his father, and for himself, as his heir,[178] utterly renounced all right and title to that which they had hitherto assumed in the church of Trilawe, declaring that henceforward he would do nothing of the kind against the testimony of charters like these; since the king, when he gave the church to the Abbey of Battel, might, had he wished, without any obstacle, have given the manor itself. These things being heard (contrary to all expectation), the whole right of the church of Trilawe was assigned to the monastery of Battel, and thus all controversy was quieted. William de Orbec, however, still held the church he had so illegally acquired, and acting as if he were really the incumbent, received all the profits. It therefore remained to proceed against *him*, that henceforth all occasion of complaint might be removed. But he, although deprived of the patronage of those upon whom he had relied, grew more unreasonable in proportion as his danger increased. He sought to defend his claim merely from his having been insti-

then to Northampton.

The defendant unexpectedly yields.

The priest De Orbec, at first pertinacious,

[178] This corrects the baronages, which make Gilbert Peché, not Gaufrid or Geoffry, the son and heir of Haymo. See *Banks*, vol. i, p. 392.

tuted by the bishop, but in vain, since it was apparent to all that that proceeding had been illegal. He was therefore in great difficulties, seeing himself deprived, on one hand, of any excuse for possessing it, and on the other, of any good reason for resisting. Finding no other resource, he was compelled to renounce all the right to the church which he claimed. Coming, therefore, before the lord bishop of Norwich, he resigned the church, with all its rights, into his hands, and being thus deprived, the bishop instituted the forementioned clerk, Thomas, upon the presentation of the abbot and convent of S. Martin of Battel. And Thomas peaceably possessed it from that time under an annual pension. Thus was the annoyance of every adversary quieted.

at length submits.

From the time of the dedication of the monastery of S. Martin of Battel, until nearly the last days of the venerable Walter, the profits accruing from the churches with which King William the Second had endowed it had been rare and few; since in their assignation it was decided, by the advice of the king and the bishops, as well as of others present at the dedication, that each of the incumbents of those nine churches, who had been previously instituted and were then surviving, should pay a pension of ten shillings per annum to Battel Abbey; and that after their death the churches themselves, and the profits arising out of them, should be entirely at the disposal of the abbot and monks of Battel. It was also prudently determined, that when the abbot should go, once a year, into those parts where the churches were situated, for the purpose of visiting them, two nights' lodging should be dutifully provided by each incumbent, besides the pension, lest in every such journey of visitation the abbot might be compelled to lay out more, for the expenses of himself and his suite, than the proceeds of the churches brought in.

Abbot Walter turns his mind to improve the pensions arising from certain churches.

Now these incumbents survived a long time, and although

the abbot and monks of Battel, during that period, received nothing from each of the churches except the ten shillings, yet because the number *ten* was concerned, they called them tithes. And no one thought it worth while to dispute about the name of tithes, as if some portion of the tithes of those churches, and not the churches themselves, had been assigned to the monastery of Battel; though it is clear enough, from the confirmation of King William the Second, who was at the dedication, and that of his brother and successor, King Henry, that the churches, with the tithes and profits arising from them, were granted *wholly* to the Abbey. As long as these incumbents lived, these nine churches proved more trouble than profit to the abbot and monks; for as they were situated at a great distance, the abbot and monks were not able often to visit them, except with much difficulty. And as they were much engaged with other business, and made their visits but rarely, the due pensions were paid sometimes unwillingly, and sometimes not at all. In consideration of this, Abbot Ralph, of excellent memory, with the advice of his convent, committed the care of all the churches to Richard de Bellafago,[179] archdeacon of Norwich, having first taken an oath from him, in the presence of all the monks in the chapter-house at Battel, that he would every year duly pay the required pensions, and that he would prove himself everywhere faithful in the preservation of their rights. But as it afterwards proved, the obligation of that oath was neglected, and a great deal of perplexity arose out of the proceeding; for Richard being promoted after some time to the bishopric, his son, Alan de Bellafago, seized Brantham, one of the churches in question. He took this upon the unlawful authority of his father, who, forgetful of his oath and of religion, had some short time before taken it into his hands, and carried himself as if he had been the incumbent; and the

These churches committed to the charge of R. de Beaufoy.

[179] *Beaufoy*, or *Bewfewe*.

son, rashly succeeding the father, held the sanctuary of God as if by heirship. After a little time, Abbot Ralph dying, Abbot Warner succeeded him, and King Henry the First also being dead, King Stephen obtruded himself upon the kingdom as his successor; in whose times, peace being banished from the kingdom, all things were exposed to plunder. At that time it seemed the highest prudence for those who had been despoiled of their own, if they happened to have anything left, to look well to it, lest that should also be seized upon; for as to recovering what had already been plundered, the thing was utterly impossible. During these adverse times, Alan de Bellafago received the profits and revenues of the church of Brantham, deporting himself as if he were the incumbent, and although frequently reminded of it, he by no means consented to make satisfaction. But since there was no power of compulsion, all proceedings against him were of necessity delayed for the time, in the hope that succeeding times might introduce somewhat of peace and of equity.

During this unsettled state of the country, Abbot Warner voluntarily resigned the government of the abbacy of Battel; and to him some time after succeeded the venerable Abbot Walter. King Stephen being dead, and Henry the Second succeeding, peace was in some measure restored in the country, and Abbot Walter began carefully to manage the Abbey committed to his charge.

Abbot Walter visits these churches.

Some time after his institution, intending, according to the practice of those who undertake new administrations, to go to those lands and possessions which lay in different and remote places, for the sake of visitation, he issued his commands to the priests and clerks of the above-mentioned churches in Essex, Norfolk, and Suffolk, that they should, according to due custom, prepare, within the possessions of those churches, two nights' lodging for him and his suite.

The bearer of this message came to Brantham, and pre-

sented the order of the abbot to Alan de Bellafago, but he would by no means consent to receive him, either as a superior or as a guest, asserting that he was not bound by any obligation of this kind to him. The abbot for a long time deferred to revenge himself of so great an injury and so high a contempt, hoping that Alan might come to himself and think better of it. But Alan perceiving that he could do so presumptuous a thing with impunity, not yet satisfied, proceeded from bad to worse. For the abbot, going again into those parts where the churches were situated, happened to arrive, on the festival of the transitus of the blessed Martin, at Mendlesham, the church of which place is one of those conferred upon the Abbey, and was becomingly received by Withgar, who had long since been instituted incumbent of the church, to perform the solemn rites of his patron (S. Martin) there. This Withgar, wishing to provide for his successors, begged the abbot that he would consent to admit his son, named Nicholas, to the church of Mendlesham, to be instituted by the bishop upon the abbot's presentation.[180] The abbot yielded at length to his earnest entreaty, with this proviso, that Withgar, who had hitherto paid but ten shillings a year in the name of that church, should for the future pay forty shillings. This being agreed to on both sides, a day was fixed for confirming the transaction. On the appointed day, the abbot came, with his attendants, to Colchester, and thither also came Withgar, with his son Nicholas. The above-named agreement for the payment of a pension of forty shillings, was ratified by both father and son, upon their word and oath, in the presence of the abbot and his monks, some knights, and a great many others, both clergy and laymen. Another day was afterwards appointed by the abbot, for Withgar and

Alan de Beaufoy refuses to entertain the abbot.

[180] The mention of a priest's son appears, at first sight, singular; but it should be remembered that the canon law enjoining the celibacy of the clergy was very gradually enforced; and in this work we have two instances of its violation in the twelfth century. Married priests are spoken of as the more moral, as well as the larger, part of the English clergy in this century. (*Spelman Conc.* ii, 29. Cited in Lat. edit.)

his son Nicholas to come to Battel, to receive the assent of the convent, and a charter of confirmation. They came according to appointment, on the day of the purification of the blessed Mary, and then, in the presence of the abbot and the whole convent, Nicholas again gave his word and oath for the annual payment of the pension of forty shillings, and for the honourable maintenance of unfeigned faith towards the abbot and monastery of S. Martin of Battel. The common consent of the monks being obtained, a charter of confirmation was given him.

Alan stirs up Withgar against the abbot.

Now after the pension of forty shillings had been for some time duly paid, Alan de Bellafago beguiled Withgar and his son Nicholas, and persuaded them—the obligation of their word and oath laid aside—to withhold the payment of it; asserting that the church of Mendlesham was his own, and pretending that the augmentation of the pension made without his concurrence was null and void. To fortify this assertion, he produced certain charters of Abbot Warner, which appeared on close inspection to bear marks of fraud and falsehood; constantly affirming upon their evidence that the church of Mendlesham, the church of Brantham, and that of Branford, which also is one of the dowry churches,[181] were his own by the gift of Abbot Warner. Withgar and his son Nicholas, yielding to his persuasion, consented, and withholding the payment of the pension, asserted that they held the church of Mendlesham, not in the name of the monastery of Battel, but in that of Alan de Bellafago.

The claim heard at S. Edmund's.

When the abbot became acquainted with these proceedings, he went again to that province, and summoned both to meet him for conference at S. Edmund's. They met him, therefore, armed with the advocacy of the aggressive Alan de Bellafago. The abbot accused both of the

[181] The churches which had been given to Battel Abbey by Rufus at the dedication are always styled *ecclesiæ dotales*.

breach of the agreement entered into between them, and of the transgression of their word and oath, when Alan de Bellafago stood forward, and declared that the church of Mendlesham was his; that Withgar held it of him as vicar; and that the arrangement concerning the augmentation of the pension ought to be of no force, as it was made without his concurrence. Withgar and his son Nicholas applauded this, and the abbot endeavoured to withdraw them from such daring presumption of wickedness, but without success. They continued obstinate, and cried out that all that Alan had spoken was as if it had come out of their own mouths. Thus they both incurred the stigma of unfaithfulness and perjury, and Nicholas was upbraided by all as a traitor, since he had so recently made oath to keep good faith with the abbot, whom he was now resisting to his face. But although they incurred the stigma of so great a crime, and exposed themselves in many ways to infamy, they were by no means willing to abandon their malignity, while Alan pertinaciously maintained their defence. For Withgar still said, that Alan had spoken all things as if with his own mouth, while Nicholas affirmed that he would on no account recede from his father's decision.

Abbot Walter applies to the king.

The abbot, finding them persist in such obstinate rebellion, was unwilling to contend with them to no purpose, judging it advisable to await a more favourable time. Our lord the king was then beyond sea, but the abbot was unable to go over to him in person; he therefore sent certain of his friends with letters as their credentials to him, in order that they might make a verbal statement of the affair, and seek his advice and assistance. In the meantime, Withgar having died, Alan de Bellafago seized the church of Mendlesham as vacant, and without the permission of the abbot and convent of Battel, took entire possession of it for himself—the perjured Nicholas, the son of Withgar, being absolutely turned out! On hearing this, the abbot took care

to acquaint the lord bishop of Norwich, both by letters and by the verbal statements of his messenger, that the church of Mendlesham belonged to him, thus to provide by a prudent activity against Alan or any other person being admitted to it without his consent, and obtaining institution from the bishop. Alan therefore instituted himself, nor would he by any means consent to renounce his unjust possession.

Meantime the abbot's messengers returned from abroad, bearing letters to the king's justices, ordering that full justice should be done the abbot of Battel respecting the church of Mendlesham. By royal authority a day was prescribed to the abbot and Alan at Winchester, that by the action of one and the objection of the other, the truth might be more fully investigated. This was done by royal authority, yet without any injury of ecclesiastical rights or dignities, since the royal court had merely to inquire upon whose presentation Alan had been instituted to the church of Mendlesham, which, situated in a royal manor, had been granted to the monastery of Battel by the king's predecessors, and confirmed to it by the king himself. For it was clear that he could not be instituted except upon the presentation either of the king, as lord of the manor, or that of the monks of Battel, to whom it was well known the church itself had been assigned by the royal bounty. At the appointed day and place, Robert the Philosopher (of whom we have before spoken, and who was still living) attended on behalf of the abbot, to act against Alan, who appeared in person. He explained to the justices the right of the monastery of Battel, and complained of its invasion by Alan; while the latter resisting him, produced the charters of abbot Warner before mentioned, and asserted that he had been admitted, while that abbot was living, with his consent. And although on careful inspection those charters bore some marks of falsehood, yet it was the unanimous opinion and advice of all present,

The cause heard before the judges.

that it would be better to compromise the affair than to litigate it further.

Each party consented to the counsel and goodwill of these advisers, and the following form of compromise was given by the judges: that Alan, freely renouncing all the claim which he conceived he had upon the church of Mendlesham, should resign the charters by which he had defended it into the hands of the abbot. And, the abbot's favour being thus obtained, that he should hold the church of Brantham alone (which, as we have said, he had irregularly obtained, and out of which a pension of ten shillings had been paid by antient custom) as long as he lived, in the name of the monastery of Battel, under the annual pension of one crown; and thus all dispute and controversy would be ended. *A compromise agreed to.*

All approving of this compromise, and the parties themselves consenting to it, a day was appointed for the abbot in person, and Alan, to meet at Canterbury before the justices, for the purpose of binding the compact. The abbot attended at the time and place stipulated, but Alan neither appeared himself nor sent any one to excuse him, and was therefore, by the judgment of all, delivered over to the king's mercy. But afterwards a day was again fixed for meeting at London, and for confirming the transaction on both sides. At length they met at that time and place, and the whole of the proceedings and the nature of the proposed composition having been fully explained, in the hearing of the king's justices and many others, Alan resigned his charters into the abbot's hands, and, in return, received his charter to hold the church of Brantham in the name of Battel Abbey, under an annual pension of one crown.

This affair was settled, and all controversy supposed to be at an end, when Alan, as if about to commence a new suit, suddenly began to take measures, though in a concealed manner, concerning the church of *The dispute renewed,*

Brantham,[182] which he asserted to be his, thus seeking to ascertain if any way lay open by which he might acquire it. But finding no supporter in this attempt, he excited great indignation of the whole royal court against himself; for it seemed to be the opinion of all that he held the recently-made composition as a nullity, and that if the charters were restored to him he would begin the trial anew; thus showing that he was influenced not by a desire for peace and concord, but by motives of strife and revenge. Finding himself in a difficult position, since this affair had not turned out to his wishes, he applied to the abbot through Richard, archdeacon of Poitou,[183] promising entirely to renounce all the right which he claimed to have in any of the dowry churches of the monastery, if he would institute his brother, Roger de Bellafago, to the church of Brantham, to hold it for life in the name of Battel Abbey, under the same pension as had previously been fixed.

The abbot, taking the advice of his friends, determined to accede to Alan's petition, thinking it a favourable opportunity of breaking all connection between him and the monastery. He consented therefore, but in a prudent manner, as if he were not induced by any good will towards him, but by respect to the mediation of the archdeacon. Alan now came forward, and in the presence of the king's justices and of the barons and many others, in the exchequer, and renounced for ever his claims upon the churches of Brantham, Mendlesham, Branford, and the rest of the dowry churches; and, in return, the abbot granted the church of Brantham alone to Roger de Bellafago, to be held of Battel Abbey under a pension of one crown. But, lest anything in this arrangement should appear to be done without the concurrence of his convent, he fixed a day for Roger to attend at Battel, to receive their confirmation and charter, that, having there taken an oath for fidelity and for the due payment of the

and composed again.

[182] In co. Suffolk.

[183] Afterwards bishop of Winchester.

pension, he might be sent to the bishop of Norwich, to be instituted at the presentation of the abbot and convent. When all that the case demanded had been rightly performed, and everything was supposed to be peaceably settled, Roger suddenly died, and left the church vacant.

Alan de Bellafago, however, did not allow it to remain long vacant, but had the presumption unlawfully to seize upon it, without the consent of the abbey and convent. When the abbot heard of this, it was more than his patience could endure, and he determined again to make complaint in the king's court of this unjust invasion. At this, Alan, very much alarmed, applied to the abbot, through some men of distinction, and humbly sought pardon and forgiveness. Those personages earnestly exerted themselves on his behalf, and promised a suitable satisfaction for his presumption; and the abbot, prevailed upon by their importunate requests, deferred his complaint for a time—willing on one hand to satisfy, in some degree, the entreaties of the mediators, and on the other to prove more surely the promised satisfaction of Alan. But, as the time was now approaching when he should depart out of this life, nothing further was done in the business. Alan in the meanwhile made no sort of satisfaction, but after the abbot's death held the church of Brantham, upon his own authority, for some years, with all the revenues arising from it.

The abbot's zeal in the recovery of lost rights.

It must suffice briefly to have mentioned a few of the labours and exertions of the venerable Abbot Walter, in seeking to recover churches and lands unjustly alienated; for to give a full detail of them all would be a laborious undertaking. It is proper, however, by all means briefly to state, that unless he had manfully and prudently exerted himself for the recovery of the dowry churches, the Abbey of Battel would certainly have lost all the right in them which it had possessed in former times, entirely and irrevocably. For the knights who by the gift of the kings

that had succeeded William the Second, had obtained the vills and manors within whose boundaries the churches stood, claimed the right of patronage over them. They argued that the church was the head of every parish in which it was situated, and, the head being the chief part of the body, they affirmed that they had a fuller right to the churches than even to the lands themselves. But the abbot stood manfully forward in defence of the Lord's house, and wrested every one of them from the talons of those who had seized them (not, however, without great difficulty), and restored them to the possession of the monastery of Battel. Thus, in all things, he regarded the honour and advantage of his Abbey, although it may be thought by some, in more recent times, that he might have acted with more prudence in the recovery of those churches. For it is said, that if he had employed every means, he might have succeeded in transferring to the use of the monastery the churches themselves, with all the profits arising from them, by appointing vicars to serve them for a suitable yearly consideration. It is thought he might have done so at that time, inasmuch as he enjoyed the favour of the king, through whom he might have obtained these or greater things from the supreme pontiff; and supported as he also was by his venerable brother, Richard de Lucy, who, second only to the king, held the name and office of chief-justice in the realm. The abbot, then, acted as it is said, somewhat incircumspectly in granting those churches to clerks, to be held by pensions, taking by agreement small portions of their abundant revenues, when he might, by proper exertions, have easily obtained the whole. However, although he did not act in conformity with this modern opinion, still, in the recovery of the churches, it is clear that he did much for the Abbey; for by strenuous exertion he recovered a lost and all but irrecoverable right, and that right being restored, he caused those churches which in some instances had yielded few profits, and in others in those

adverse times none at all, to pay in the whole, as annual pensions, the sum of more than twenty-two marks of silver. Out of these pensions he assigned seven pounds to the works of the Abbey: viz., a hundred shillings from Aylesham[184] church, and forty from that of Middlehale, laying upon all who should transfer that money to other uses, or on any account withdraw it, or should council or aid in its transference or withdrawment, a perpetual curse. This he did with the permission and consent of his convent, thus setting a good example to his successors.

He appoints a moiety of the tithes of Wye for the sacristy of Battel.

Until the time of this venerable man, a moiety of the tithes of the lordship of Wye had been assigned to the herdsmen of that manor, and thus the Lord's inheritance was the reward of hirelings. The abbot seeing this to be quite uncanonical, provided in another way for the oxmen, from the manorial land, and with the consent of the convent assigned that moiety to the sacristy of Battel Abbey, appointing that out of that tithe two tapers should be provided to burn in the choir before the monks, whenever they should require candle-light. He appointed besides a yearly gift of white wine to the convent, with a pepper-cake[185] to every monk, besides the *simenel* payable out of the common cellar, with two good dishes, in addition to those ordinarily due from the kitchen, one of which, if circumstances will possibly

His anniversary gift of wine, &c.

[184] Aylesham, co. Suffolk.

[185] "Cum singulis *guastellis piperatis* singulis monachis." Ordinarily, *wastel* is a fine kind of bread, second only to the *simenel* described in a former note. Chaucer, who flourished two centuries subsequently to Abbot Walter, describes his prioress as keeping "small houndes" which

"sche fedde
With rostud fleissh, and mylk, and *wastel breed.*"

In the present instance the wastel was seasoned with pepper (or more probably with spice) to be eaten with the wine. This obsolete article is commemorated in the well-known nursery rhyme, the hero of which is skilled in divers culinary arts:

"He can brew and he can bake,
He can make a *pepper-cake*," &c.

admit, shall be of fresh salmon; and the measure of wine for each of the brethren shall not be less than a gallon. This benefaction he desired to be made, during his life, on the day of the decollation of John the Baptist; but after his decease, on the anniversary of his own death. And lest any one of his successors should threaten to change this custom, or in any way to oppose it, he put on his stole, and went into the chapter-house with a lighted candle, and commanded every brother who performed service, whether as priest or deacon, to take his stole and lighted candle, together with the band of subdeacons, and those of inferior rank, and the converts, with lighted candles alone; and there, with the countenance and consent of all present, he pronounced a perpetual and inexorable anathema upon all who should violate this institution.

Gift of Smewin's Wist.

In the time of this venerated personage, two knights, residing in the vicinity of the monastery, named Ingelram de Scotney [186] and Robert Bos, presented to the Abbey, for the salvation of themselves and theirs, and free from every custom of earthly service, two lands from their estate, adjoining each other, near the wood called Bathurst. The devotion of these knights was the more laudable, inasmuch as they determined to confer upon the Abbey that which being so near at hand was so much the more convenient. The land which Ingelram de Scotney gave is now called by the inhabitants "Smewin's Wist."

The foregoing narration has shown how thirty acres of meadow at Bodiham were given, upon payment of fifty shillings, to Abbot Gausbert, in the time of King William the

[186] This family derived their name from Scotney Castle, near Lamberhurst, on the boundary of Sussex and Kent, now the property of E. Hussey, Esq. The names of several of Ingram's descendants occur in the archives of the Abbey. They appear ultimately to have fallen to ruin in consequence of the crimes, real or pretended, of Walter de Scotney, who, according to the chronicler, Edmund de Hadenham, in 1259, administered poison to Richard, earl of Gloucester, and his brother, William de Clare, of which the latter died. De Scotney, who was steward to the earl, was hanged at Winchester, in spite of his protestations of innocence. (Vide Blaauw's *Barons' War*, p. 61.)

First, by the knight Osbern Fitz-Hugh. Now, inasmuch as that meadow is somewhat remote from the Abbey, it seemed desirable that the custody of it should be given to some trustworthy person who resided in the neighbourhood. But as it was unsafe to commit this charge to any one who was not dependent upon the Abbey, and as all the meadow was so wet that there was no suitable site for a house, in course of time it was arranged with a knight, named Robert Borne, who resided in the vicinity, that he should grant to God and S. Martin, in free and everlasting possession, a piece of land from his estate contiguous to the meadow. A house fit for the keeper of the meadow was then erected.

Robert Borne's gift of land for the building of a house at Bodiham,

This Robert Borne, at the request of the brethren, also granted a roadway from the meadow, as far as his fee extended, in the direction of Battel (formerly granted by his father), for the conveyance, by means of carts or wagons, of hay and other necessaries. This gift was entirely free and exempt from all claims of his brothers, heirs, and successors. The brethren, in acknowledgment of this kindness, and for the sake of evidence hereafter, gave him six shillings and iron leg-harness, which some properly designate greaves, by which he might equip one of his brothers for the wars.

together with a roadway,

Now there was a slip of land lying between the above-mentioned meadow and the recently-acquired keeper's house, which seemed convenient for the brethren, for the purposes of a wharf, on which they might land such things as were brought thither for their use by a vessel.[187] The venerable Abbot Walter, therefore, personally and through his friends, applied to Robert Borne and Ralph his son, and prevailed upon them to give that slip of land as they had done the manse which it adjoined, for their souls' health and that of their friends, to God and S. Martin, to be quietly held for ever.

and a wharf.

[187] This passage is interesting, as showing that the Rother, at Bodiham, was navigable for a sailing vessel (*navigium*) in the twelfth century.

They both consented, and endowed him with it in the monastery of S. Martin before the high altar; but the abbot determined not to accept it without some remuneration, and therefore, by way of return, as well as for evidence hereafter, caused ten shillings to be given to the father, and a crown to the son.

We have inserted, as a memorial to future times, such transactions as we could recollect concerning these lands (though very small), because previously to their being added to the possessions of the Abbey, both the brethren and their servants had been subjected to many vexatious annoyances, to say nothing of their expenses, concerning them. For they had no ingress or regress to the meadow in question except through lands not their own, and the owners of the surrounding lands vexed them with challenges, and would not permit them to have a free passage through their property. By the careful management of the abbot, however, these and many other affairs of the Abbey were brought into better order.

A miracle,

In his days, moreover, the Lord vouchsafed to visit the Abbey of Battel, and in order to show forth the merits of his blessed confessor S. Martin, made the place resplendent with frequent miracles. Then came thither a great multitude of both sexes, both for penance and the remission of their sins, and for the healing of their diseases. Out of those who thus came, some, suddenly falling down, wallowed upon the earth, and were by some secret judgment of God miserably tormented. Others who were present, and were not subjected to the same pains and contortions, began unreasonably to scorn these divine manifestations as if they were not of God; and, having in them neither piety nor any bowels of compassion, insolently derided the sufferings of their friends, whom, out of regard to the common frailty of human nature, they ought to have compassionated. Provoked by this, and by the unworthy lives of some of the inhabitants, the Lord waxed angry against these ungrateful people, and withdrew this favour from

at which the incredulous sneer, so that the honour intended for Battel,

them as undeserving of it. He revealed to one of the faithful, in a vision, his intention to have glorified the place before men, and his determination to change his design and to withdraw his vouchsafed favour, in consequence of the great impiety of some who dwelt there. What then shall we say to these things? It rather becomes us to bewail than to speak of them. Alas, alas! how great is the unhappiness of men who betray such ingratitude for divine manifestations, and neglect to pay the service of a becoming homage to their Creator! From this it is beyond question that, as they undeservedly receive many things from God, so they lose innumerable favours through their ingratitude. But still the Lord, who is kind and merciful, and of great compassion, did not utterly withdraw the granted favour, but at his pleasure transferred it. He transferred it, indeed, from the mother to the daughter; that is to say, from the Abbey of the blessed Martin of Battel to the church of S. Nicholas, in the city of Exeter, which is its cell, and which was at that time in a state of dejection. For the church there, before the building had been fully completed, was, by a second and sudden fire in the town, reduced to a ruin. The glory of the Lord, then, was manifested in signs and miracles, which rendered famous not only the place itself, but other parts of the kingdom where its monks or clerks came to preach. As these miracles increased, the name of the blessed Nicholas was spread abroad in all directions, and the place began to be frequented by the faithful of both sexes, and of every age, creed, and rank, who brought together so much gain as sufficed not merely to rebuild the church destroyed by the recent fire, but also to construct handsome buildings for the residence of the brethren who dwelt there in charge of it. By the grace of God, the Abbey of S. Martin of Battel was not in these things altogether disappointed, since the honour of the daughter is the glory of her mother. O happy places and times which the mercy of God hath thus visited!

is transferred to the cell at Exeter

Abbot Walter's character.

Many, indeed, are the noble acts of the venerable Abbot Walter with which we are acquainted, but not wishing to burden our readers or hearers with too much prolixity, we shall, for the rest, adhere to brevity, and unfold to the prudent reader many things which may easily be understood, in few words. In the execution of the pastoral office his manner was such that, to the disobedient and irregular he showed himself rigid and severe, while to the meek and obedient he was ever placable and kind. With great pity towards the poor, he allayed their hunger with food, and covèred their nakedness with raiment. He especially compassionated the forlorn condition of those afflicted with leprosy and elephantiasis, whom he was so far from shunning, that he frequently waited upon them in person, washing their hands and feet, and with the utmost cordiality imprinting upon them the soothing kisses of love and piety.[188] On no account would he suffer the dignities and liberties of his Abbey to be diminished, nor its goods and possessions to be withdrawn or wasted through negligence. The charge of those possessions he committed to others in such a manner as that he himself had the superintendence of the whole. The Abbey itself, whose government he had undertaken in unprosperous times, he protected from the violence of its adversaries with all his might, and those things of which it had been despoiled, he vigorously, in the subsequent season of tranquillity, recovered. In the early days of his promotion he was unable to devote anything to hospitality, as the means were wanting; for adversaries had seized nearly all that belonged to the monastery, so that there was scarcely sufficient left for the bare sustenance of the brethren. In more peaceful times, when he had, with great exertion and

His faithful administration.

[188] This dreadful scourge, which is conjectured to have been brought into western Europe by the pilgrims and crusaders, gave rise to the foundation of many lazar-houses, or hospitals of lepers. From the above statement it seems probable that there was such an establishment connected with Battel Abbey.

expense, recovered the most part of what had been taken away, he effected a great reformation in the house, and restored old and proper customs, so that to whomsoever knocked a door was opened, and no one who sought entertainment suffered a repulse; and thus the duties of humanity were exercised, according to the dignity or condition of the applicants. Not trusting to others in matters of business rather than to himself, he paid frequent visits of inspection to the abbatial manors, and there caused edifices fit for the reception of the powerful and noble to be erected. These manors being situated in various and distant localities, the sheriffs and other powerful men of the several districts sought to vex both himself and the tenants of the Abbey, by their unjust claims, expecting to receive gifts for the restoration of their goods and liberties; but he, devoid of fear as to all these, was resolved not to satisfy their cupidity; for he so enjoyed the king's goodwill, through which he could obtain everything he desired, that he restrained those who entertained the wish to molest him from the power of doing so, and they were thus disappointed of the hope of obtaining any reward from him.

Enriches the church, and rebuilds the cloisters.

He took great delight also in the beauty of God's house, and adorned his monastery with such palls, casulæ, cappæ, albs, dalmatics, tunics, tapestry, banners, and such a great variety of ornaments, as none of his predecessors had ever done the like. The cloister, which at the first erection of the Abbey had been but meanly built, he pulled down, and erected another of marble slabs and columns, of smooth and polished workmanship. When this was finished, he intended to construct a lavatorium of the same material and workmanship, and had even engaged the workmen, when his death took place; but although he was unable to finish it, he left the necessary funds for its completion.

His death.

While the Abbey was in this flourishing state, and when from these promising blossoms a fruitful crop was

anticipated, on a sudden all hope was cut off, and this venerable man was taken from the midst. Though his lower extremities were half dead, and he had for many years laboured under continual ill health, yet he never indulged himself, but constantly stood forth against every adversary in defence of the Abbey committed to his charge. At length, going to the abbatial manor of Wye for the purpose of visiting it, he began on a sudden to grow worse. His weakness daily increasing, he sent for Clarenbald, abbot of the neighbouring monastery of Faversham, a venerable personage of great sanctity in those parts, to confer with him concerning his soul's health, and to do penance for the excesses of which he had been guilty in this present life. "For there is no man that liveth and sinneth not." [189] Thus, frequently receiving the sacrament of the body and blood of the Lord, he gave orders to the prior of his Abbey with certain brothers to come to him without delay. In obedience to this command, the prior, attended by the brethren, came, and the abbot diligently conferred with him also about the health of his soul, and begged pardon both of him and of the brethren with him, for any injuries he might have done them, either deservedly or not, first forgiving them the like offences against himself. The prior and brethren, acting on behalf of the whole convent, forgave him all things, and blessed him in the name of all. He, in return, with paternal love, blessed them, and relaxed such sentences as he had upon any occasion laid upon any of the brethren, and by the pastoral office which he held absolved them all. As he was daily growing weaker, his illustrious brother, Richard de Lucy, came to see him, and he, judging by his sight and his speech, seeing no hope of his recovery, advised his speedy removal to his Abbey. Lest anything which ecclesiastical custom holds requisite should be wanting to him, now that his end was approaching—his

[189] 1 Kings, viii, 48.

mind and understanding being meanwhile perfectly sound, and he calling upon God—he was anointed; and being thus laid upon a litter, was conveyed by horses to Battel. On his arrival there, he had entirely lost his voice, and his breath scarcely stirred within his bosom. His sons ran sorrowfully to meet him, to see their father more than half dead and just departing, but not to enjoy his conversation. Every one kissed him as he lay, awaiting the unknown hour (for the day of his future existence seemed to dawn), and fortified him for his departure with their prayerful devotions. When he had thus passed the night and the following day, panting for breath, and the second night had now covered the earth with its shadows, all present thought he was about to depart. He was therefore carried with all possible haste into the chapter-house, there, according to the custom of the Abbey, to breathe out his spirit. He was laid upon the sackcloth and ashes[190] there made ready, when on a sudden he began to move all his limbs, which before had seemed dead, and also his lips as if for the purpose of speaking. At this all the brethren were excited, and those who were standing nearest to him applied their ears to his mouth, but as there was no word uttered, but only a kind of hissing, they were unable to understand anything of what he desired to say. The night was wearing away, and daylight was breaking, when he yielded up his soul into the hands and will of his Creator, while the brethren standing around commended the departing one with devout prayers to the Lord. His exequies were becomingly celebrated for two days, and then the dust was returned to the dust out of which it was taken, and he was buried before the larger crucifix and the altar of the cross of the Crucified.[191] He was gathered to his fathers in the thirty-third year of his promotion, on the eleventh

22 *June* 1171.

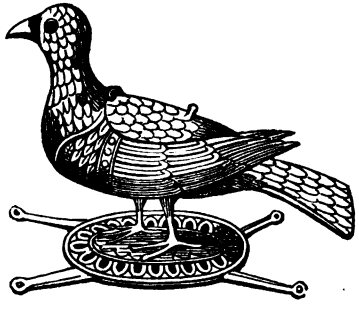
[190] All these ceremonies were in accordance with the rules of the order.

[191] "Coram majori crucifixo et altari crucis Crucifixi."

of the calends of July, in the year of our Lord's incarnation 1171.

While he is deserving of praise for his numerous good deeds, he is especially to be admired for these: with great labour and vast expense he recovered the property and possessions of the Abbey, great part of which had in adverse times been withdrawn; he restored the house to its pristine state; he decorated the church with a very great variety of ornaments, yet left the Abbey unencumbered with the slightest debt, either within or without; and he so provided for all the servants, both those who familiarly waited upon him, and those who managed affairs in common for the brethren, that none of them could justly allege that anything was wanting of what was due to them in recompense of their services. Beyond all this, at his death he left to the Abbey certain silver vessels, out of which, to the honour of God and his memory, was made a crown to hang over the high altar, gold being added for its gilding, with a Dove in the midst, made of the same material, to contain the Lord's body.[192] From such a recollection, therefore, of his kindnesses, his memory is still cherished with manifold benedictions.

[192] Pixes, in the form of a dove, suspended over the high altars of churches, were not unusual in France previously to the year 1200, about which date they began to be disused, on account of the shape being found inconvenient for carrying the host to dying persons at their dwellings. About six only of these doves are known to exist in public and private museums in France. They are all fabricated of metal, gilt and enamelled; those which were made of gold or silver having been melted down on account of their intrinsic value. At the recent "Exhibition of Antient and Medieval Art," (held in London in May, 1850), H. Magniac, Esq., exhibited a specimen of this interesting species of church-furniture. It is, like those mentioned above, of Limoges enamel, and was obtained by Mr. M. from an old antiquary at Paris, who declined naming the church from which he had procured it. Minute and interesting information on this subject exists, I am told, in the work of the Abbé Texier on the enamelled relics of the church.



The venerable Abbot Walter being thus exempted from human affairs, his illustrious brother Richard de Lucy began to exercise a diligent care for the bereaved house, and to provide for the rest and consolation of the forsaken brethren. He determined not to commit the care of the Abbey to any one who was but slightly known to, or suspected by, the brethren, and who might on any occasion be able to disturb their peace. Now there were two men of fidelity and prudence residing in the borough of Battel, in front of the Abbey gates,[193] namely, Peter de Criel, knight, and Hugh de Beche,[194] who, from the vicinity of their habitations, had almost from their cradles had familiar intercourse with the monks. These having been found faithful in many transactions, had become the most intimate friends the brethren had. They were not unknown to Richard de Lucy, for he had already some acquaintance with both of them, since, in Abbot Walter's time, they were regarded as the very first of his confidants. At his command, therefore, they paid him a visit, and he committed to them the entire secular management of the Abbey, charging them honourably to provide the brethren with all necessary food and clothing, and to see to the repairs of the buildings in which they were accustomed daily to assemble, as well as the other offices which they had for necessary uses; and also to superintend the servants employed in their common affairs, with whose help they were unable to dispense. These two personages held the stewardship, during the four years that the Abbey was vacant, with so much care towards the fraternity, that no defect or scantiness in what regularly and customarily appertained to their food and vestments was experienced

Richard de Lucy appoints two custodes.

[193] "*In burgo de Bello.*" From this it appears that the term *burgus* was far less restricted in meaning than at present. In an earlier part of this work (p. 20) the inhabitants are styled *burgenses*.

[194] The Criols or Chriols were eminent people in the district. The residence of the Beches was that numbered '2' in the enumeration of the messuages in the town of Battel. (Vide p. 15.)

through their contempt or negligence. During that period the Abbey sustained no diminution of its dignities or liberties, nor any attacks from its enemies, for all were aware that the illustrious Richard de Lucy, who next the king held the highest authority, was its protector, and that he possessed the power to repress all that should rise against it. For he had so prompt a will and such great diligence in expediting any pressing business of the Abbey that he would suffer no procrastination, knowing that delay often brings danger. Hence, since he was much occupied with the arduous affairs of the kingdom in connection with his chief justiceship, and had not always leisure for minor matters, he ordered his notaries and keepers of his seal, that whenever they knew any one apply concerning the business of the Abbey, they should settle everything in his name out of hand, without waiting for his opinion, except in cases of difficulty.

A moiety of the church of Wye presented to Godfrey, son of Richard de Lucy,

At this time William, priest of the church of Wye, who held a moiety of that church from the gift of the late abbot and the brethren, died. When the knowledge of this circumstance reached Richard de Lucy, he directed a letter to the prior and convent, praying that they would grant it to his son, Godfrey de Lucy,[195] to hold as William had held it. The letter being read in the presence of all, they resolved to comply with the wishes of this great man, whom they had found so ready to assist them in all their affairs. They therefore unanimously consented, and in their reply to the petitioner signified their donation of what was solicited, stating that the priest William had held a moiety only of the church, which they would now freely grant, upon his petition, to his son Godfrey de Lucy.

Godfrey finding that a moiety only, and not the whole

[195] Godfrey de Lucy was a person of eminence. "In 1189 he was bishop of Winchester, and in 1197 chief justice, as his father had been."—(Note in *Lat. Ed.*)

church, was granted him, ungratefully resolved to repay evil for good, endeavouring with all his might to extort from the brethren the other moiety which had not been conceded, and thus to get the church entirely into his own hands. He immediately applied, both in person and through friends, to the king, stating that the church of Wye was vacant by the death of the priest, and that he had the consent of the prior and convent of Battel to succeed to it. He urged that, as the abbot was dead, the king himself held the abbatial prerogative, and requested, since their assent had been obtained, that he would vouchsafe to grant him the church by his royal authority. It appears that in his statement to the king, he either suppressed the fact that one half only of the church had been granted him, or in some other way circumvented him by withholding the truth. The king yielded to his solicitations, and not only granted him the whole church, but also confirmed it, and directed letters to the venerable Richard, archbishop-elect of Canterbury, for his institution. And the archbishop-elect, although as yet possessed of little dignity and power—inasmuch as his election had not received the pope's confirmation—instituted him with the little authority he possessed, and confirmed his institution with such a charter as he could give. Subsequently, after having gone to the apostolical see for consecration, and done there what was necessary, on his return to England, the archbishop (now primate of all England and legate of the apostolical see) on Godfrey's application granted all things as before, and confirmed them by his episcopal authority. He is said, however, to have instituted him conditionally, saving the rights of all men. There was, therefore, during the whole time that the Abbey was vacant, a great dissension between the brethren and Godfrey; for while Godfrey struggled to get the whole church into his hands, the brethren strove to retain the moiety of it which had not been granted him by them.

who surreptitiously obtains the other moiety from the king.

It happened at this time that many churches and monasteries in England were vacant. And although the cause of this may seem a little foreign to our subject, yet we have thought it improper to pass it over in silence.

Story of Thomas à Becket.

Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury, having been gathered to his fathers in a good old age, Thomas, archdeacon of Canterbury, the king's chancellor (who, as the foregoing narration has shown, stood so manfully with Abbot Walter, of excellent memory, against Hilary bishop of Chichester, and acted as an advocate in defence of the liberty of Battel Abbey), succeeded him in the title and office of archbishop. The memory of his virtues deserves to be cherished among the brethren of that church in proportion to the solicitude he manifested in defending its liberties. While he held the office of chancellor he was, after the king, among the distinguished the most eminent, among the powerful the mightiest, and among the monarch's intimates the most familiar. The king on this account exerted himself by every means to promote him to the dignity of archbishop of Canterbury, which is reckoned the highest ecclesiastical post in the realm. For he calculated that from their long-standing intimacy he would yield to him in all things, and on no occasion whatever oppose his wishes. But while he proposed this, God saw fit to dispose far otherwise. For the venerable Thomas, having attained this elevated position, thought more of the obligations than of the honour it imposed upon him; more of the weight of the pastoral charge than of the temporal dignity. "Honours," in his case, according to the vulgar proverb, "changed behaviour" indeed, not according to the experience of most men, for the worse, but day by day for the better; for "putting off the old man which is according to the world," he sought to "put on the new man which is created according to God." [196]

[196] Ephes. iv, 22.

Meanwhile the king began to wish to oppress the clergy, demanding for that purpose the assent of the archbishop and his suffragans. But while the bishops consented, the archbishop refused to do so, regarding himself as the defender of the church, and not its opponent. The king, therefore, with the bishops and chief men of the realm, burnt against him with such great indignation, that their antient friendship went for nothing in comparison with this newly-conceived hatred. The archbishop nevertheless stood firmly by the church, though unsupported. All thus opposing him, and no one espousing his cause, he could do little or nothing, and seeing one danger succeed another, he chose rather to undergo a voluntary exile, than to see the church endamaged before his face. He therefore snatched himself from the midst of such iniquity, and went over to France, to seek in a foreign land that peace which he had not in his own. He retired in poverty, destitute of his property and possessions, and was immediately deprived by the hand of power of the revenues arising from them. How many sufferings he underwent in the six years of his exile, could be expressed by no one except himself, because no one else had them to experience. Among the innumerable injuries shamefully heaped upon him, the most abominable was, that when in his own person he was beyond reach, a violent hatred was excited against all his kindred; insomuch that all who were his relatives and well-wishers were adjudged to banishment with him, that if anything were wanting to his own sufferings, it might be fulfilled in theirs. It was a miserable sight, when neither age, nor sex, nor condition was spared by this shocking cruelty, when women with child, and little ones hanging at the breast, with young men, and aged persons supporting their weakly limbs with a staff, were thus driven forth.

Henry II oppresses the clergy, and sets at nought his old friend à Becket.

When the seventh year of his exile had commenced, the king pretended to have received him again into his favour, and upon the strength of this seeming

A Becket returns from exile.

reconciliation, exchanging his exile for his native land, he returned peacefully to England. On his arrival, he proceeded to the church of his primacy, relying upon the promise of peace, which however was not fulfilled. For he had been settled scarcely a month in his church, when four knights coming—I do not say *sent*—from the royal court, attacking him, this pastor of the church, in the church, and for the church, was slain,[197] by men regenerated in Christ and in the church, though now, for the commission of this monstrous crime, alienated from the church. The report of this enormous wickedness ran swiftly through the land, and crossed the seas, while its cry ascended from earth to heaven; and it was soon manifested by numerous shining miracles in all directions, that this primate had died the death of a martyr.

And is slain by the emissaries of the king.

In the meantime this martyr of the Lord, or rather the Lord himself on behalf of his martyr, seemed to seek revenge for his innocent blood; for the prince, the king's son, rebelled against his father, and receiving the sanction and aid of many of the barons, endeavoured to drive him from his kingdom. He was, therefore, deprived of all counsel and solace. On one side, an angry conscience accused him of his wickedness; on the other, an inevitable danger threatened him, for while his fleet was upon a foreign shore, his son, with an immense army, appeared ready to seize upon his kingdom.

Judgments befall the king,

Placed in this dilemma, he learned a lesson of humility,

[197] The chronicler here seems to have had in his mind a distich which was popular at the time, and which is quoted by Giraldus Cambrensis (*De Instruct. Princip.*)

"Pro Christi sponsa, Christi sub tempore, Christi
In templo, Christi verus amator obit."

For Christ's own bride, at Christ's own tide, [a]
In Christ's own church, [b] Christ's faithful lover died.

[a] Dec. 29.
[b] Christchurch, Canterbury.

and laying aside his fierceness, speedily went to Canterbury. Approaching the city barefoot, he sought the martyr's sepulchre, confessed his guilt, besought pardon, and promised fruits worthy of repentance. The Lord, with his martyr, mindful of his accustomed mercy, did not delay to afford it to the humbled monarch, for he sent a sudden fear into the hearts of his enemies, so that they immediately desisted from their purpose, and retreated from the sea which they had prepared to cross. His enemies being now all discomfited by the divine influence, and the kingdom being reduced to good order, the king began to take measures for the appointment of a pastor to the church of Canterbury, the metropolitical see of his realm. Richard, the monk of that church previously mentioned, being therefore already elected to that office, was shortly afterwards consecrated by the supreme pontiff of the Roman church. It seems by no means proper to omit this, as it is necessary to the subsequent narration; for soon after his election, while as yet his consecration was doubtful, he had performed certain public acts, all of which, from the day of his election, were by our lord the pope rendered null and void at his consecration. So that from the first days of the exile of the blessed martyr Thomas, until the return of his successor, Archbishop Richard, from Rome, many churches and monasteries in England became vacant. Thus, though episcopal sees were vacant, no election of bishops could take place, there being no archbishop either to confirm their election or to consecrate them. Nor did it seem less improper to appoint persons to the government of monasteries, when the dioceses were destitute of bishops by whom they could be instituted. Besides this, the king would not suffer aught to be done without his management, and when, shortly after the martyrdom of the blesssd Thomas, the dispute to which we have alluded broke out between him and his son, he was much engaged with other affairs, and exercised less than ordinary care

who makes a pilgrimage to Canterbury.

Election of a new archbishop.

concerning ecclesiastical matters. These things are briefly here inserted, for, although they may seem to have little to do with our subject, they are not wholly irrelevant, inasmuch as some of our subsequent facts have reference to them; to the relation of which we now direct attention.

Archbishop Richard ordains new bishops,

In the year of the Incarnation of God's Word 1175, and the twenty-first of the reign of King Henry the Second, the venerable Richard (having been himself ordained and confirmed in his see) ordained all the bishops who, recently elected, had presided in the hitherto vacant dioceses. Among these was John, bishop of Chichester, of happy memory, formerly dean of that church; Bishop Hilary, of whom such frequent mention has been made, having departed this life during the exile of the blessed martyr Thomas. Everything being arranged as to the ordination of bishops,

and in conjunction with the king proceeds to fill all ecclesiastical vacancies.

both the king and the archbishop turned their attention to the election and institution of monastic superiors. Having taken mutual counsel upon the subject, they determined that letters should be written to the various convents, commanding the prior of each, together with four or five of the brethren, —all excuses laid aside—to appear before them at Woodstock, that there, in their presence, they might, with God's aid, elect abbots to be set over them; and that the election might be fully approved by the whole of each community, it was ordered that they should bring with them letters expressive of the common purpose and consent of their convents.

Two clerks sent to Battel on this business.

For the performance of this business, two clerks were directed to go through the various provinces to execute the message committed to them at the several monasteries in their route, and these at length reached Battel. On their arrival, the prior summoned the whole congregation into the chapter-house. The clerks being introduced, handed in their orders, which were read aloud. Having thus fulfilled their commission, they

were thinking of taking their leave, when another messenger suddenly arrived, bearing unexpected letters, which he presented in the king's name. The letters were to the effect that the prior and his brethren, who were to go to the royal court about the election of a pastor, should carry with them the charters of dignities and liberties granted by the noble King William, the founder of the Abbey, and the succeeding kings. Astonished at this mandate, the whole convent began to be more alarmed and anxious than before; for well knowing that many were opposed to the dignities of the monastery, they were in great fear that the king, upon some malicious suggestion, might wish to seize upon the charters, lest the abbot, who was shortly to be appointed, should enjoy the protection of their authority; for they had not forgotten the manner in which (as the foregoing narration has shown) those liberties had formerly been exclaimed against by many as unreasonable, and, unless changed and corrected, as unworthy of observance.

The abbey charters ordered to be produced.

They suspected, therefore, that more harm than good would come of this mandate, and were much tossed and troubled in mind, praying, however, at the same time, that all might turn out for the best. They then proceeded to discuss the election of a pastor to be appointed over them, desiring by all means that he should be one of their own congregation, in accordance with the tenour of their charters. They fixed therefore upon two persons of their chapter, so that if one should happen not to be admitted, the other might be received. As the day approached upon which they were to attend before the king and the archbishop, the prior and four of the brethren set out on their journey, the whole congregation strictly charging them that they should not presume to admit any one besides the persons on whom they had unanimously agreed. Arriving at Woodstock on the appointed day, they found assembled a great

Two members of the convent nominated for the office.

number of priors with their monks, who had been summoned in the same manner. All were waiting in expectation of a summons, when behold, the very first who were called forward for the purpose of electing an abbot were the prior and monks of Battel, who entered the royal gates, leaving the rest outside. On their introduction they were brought before Gilbert, bishop of London,[198] and certain other personages, whom the king and the archbishop had directed to ascertain their views, or rather to induce them to consent to the royal will. The presidents inquired if they had come prepared, in accordance with the mandate of the king and the archbishop; if they had brought letters of consent from their whole body by which they who were absent bound themselves by the acts of those present; and, lastly, if they had agreed upon any person. They replied to each of these inquiries, and though they gave satisfaction in other particulars, the presidents said the king did not consent to the election of the persons on whom they had agreed, inasmuch as one of them was entirely unknown, and the other not acceptable; and that the king was indisposed to grant the offices of his realm to any one who was either little known or regarded with suspicion. They therefore advised them to nominate others to whose promotion the king could give his assent; and that they might more fully inform them of the king's wishes, they proposed many by name, first urging them to a concurrence by severe threats, and then persuading them by enticing words. But the prior and the brethren maintained their opinion with all their might, and declared that they could not presume to do anything beyond what the convent had agreed to and enjoined upon them; above all, they could not acquiesce in the election of the persons named by them, inasmuch as they had no knowledge of them, and must therefore be in doubt as to their good character and worthy conversation be-

The nomination is objected to.

[198] The celebrated Gilbert Foliot.

fore God and man. These abettors of the royal will strongly urging the point, the prior and monks begged a postponement, that they might signify the king's wishes to their convent, but without success. In this state of perplexity they knew not which way to turn, for while they dared not elect any one except those whom their convent had unanimously fixed upon, those who were acting in furtherance of the king's will, strenuously insisted upon their making immediate choice of another. A great portion of the day had been thus consumed in lost labour, when suddenly the king—who, with the archbishop, had been waiting for the announcement of the compliance of the prior and brethren, and was weary of the delay—burst in with a wrathful countenance, and demanded why they had been so long. Upon this, those who had been sent by him urged the matter still more strongly, and the prior and the brethren saw well enough that they could not proceed with their design, but that they must of necessity adopt another course.

Odo, prior of Canterbury, nominated by the Battel deputies.

There happened to be present on the affairs of the church of Canterbury, then lately destroyed by fire,[199] one Odo, prior of that church, a man of remarkable piety, who, in addition to other eminent qualities, had attained great renown for his eloquence, by which, being well instructed in divinity, he knew how to bring forth in season things new and old. He had come hither to the king to beg that he would, by the royal authority, renew the charters of liberties and dignities of the church of Canterbury, which had been, for the most part, destroyed by the sudden conflagration. The king appeared willing to satisfy him, holding out great hopes by his promises, which, however, were not in the end realised. This simple and right-minded man, believing his promise, further solicited that he would deign to frame those charters like those of Battel Abbey.

[199] The fire alluded to occurred in the year 1174.

The king not only did not refuse his request, but professed himself so devoted and prompt in his compliance, that he immediately sent the letters above alluded to to the prior and convent of Battel, commanding them to bring their charters of privileges to him. The venerable prior had therefore come to Woodstock, full of reliance upon the royal promise. The prior and brethren of Battel, conceiving a high opinion of this personage, consulted together, and determined, upon the persuasion of Gilbert, bishop of London, and the rest in whose presence they were standing, to elect him as their superior. The brethren were the more willing to admit him to be elected, in preference to the others who had been proposed, inasmuch as they had some knowledge of him, while of the rest they knew nothing at all. And if they were in some degree ignorant as to his moral character, a good hope and his widely-spread fame satisfied them; for they trusted that as he was so useful to the church of Canterbury, where he performed the functions of prior, he would be of service to themselves and their Abbey. It was therefore announced to the king and the archbishop, by the bishop of London, that they had conferred as to his election; and they both assented to the choice.

The election notified to Odo.

Two bishops were therefore sent to summon the prior, and they led him respectfully into the presence of the king and the primate. That discreet personage was much surprised by this mark of respect, for he would have deemed it a sufficient honour if he had been ordered into their presence by any one of inferior dignity and rank. The king and the archbishop received him on his entrance with honour, and taking their seats, made him sit down between them. In the meantime the prior and brethren of S. Martin of Battel were brought in to declare publicly whom they had elected as their pastor. At their entrance, cogitations began to arise (as he was afterwards wont to say) in the heart of that venerable man, and having some suspicions, he foresaw what

was shortly to happen to him. On their introduction, they stepped forward, and as the prior, who had lately had an attack of paralysis, could not speak very well, he commissioned one of the brethren who accompanied him to declare their choice; and the latter, approaching the king, spoke as follows:—

"The congregation dwelling in our monastery offers its thanks, most excellent lord, and we, the deputies of that congregation, offer our common thanks to your serenity, for the love you have manifested to us and our Abbey, which is also *yours*, from the beginning of your reign, and for your readiness, on all occasions, to prove that affection by your deeds. According to our experience we speak; for in the time of our late abbot, the lord Walter de Lucy of happy memory, your eminence always regarded our low estate, by promoting the affairs of our monastery as if they had been your own; neither would you suffer the liberties and dignities granted to it from its first foundation by royal authority to be in any way diminished. Nor after the death of that father did your pious, though undeserved, care for us wax cold; for these four years, during which our church has been vacant, you have acted the part of a pious pastor to us, by supplying us with food and clothing in an ample and honourable manner, and preserving our dignities and liberties in their integrity. In these things much honour is due, as your highness knows, to the illustrious lord, Richard de Lucy, who studied to fulfil the office of procurator, both in person and through his deputies, in so devoted a manner, that no one of us can with justice complain that anything which reason dictated was left unperformed. *The deputies' speech.*

"Thus far, then, your excellency has condescended to our humble condition, in such wise that there is not one amongst us who could desire to be subject to any other than yourself for the future, if ecclesiastical regulations and the custom of our order would admit of such a thing. For who is there that would voluntarily exchange what has been proved good for

that which is untried? But since by our ecclesiastical regulations every church ought to have its own pastor, to watch with a careful solicitude over the behaviour of his subordinates, we, summoned hither by your authority and that of the archbishop, are present, for the purpose of electing, with God's help, such a pastor, to be worthily set over us, according to canonical rule. For it would be rash indeed in us to transgress the decrees of the fathers. In the name, therefore, of the Holy Trinity, we now elect the venerable Master Odo, prior of the church of Canterbury, and we pray your highness to assent to our election."

Scarcely had he pronounced aloud the name of the abbot-elect, when the latter broke forth in a tone of opposition, as follows:—

Odo objects to serve the office, and appeals to the pope.

"Hearing myself named, and by an unexpected choice called to the government of the monastery of Battel, I consent not to be transferred either to that, or to any other post out of my own church of Canterbury. I cast myself, therefore, upon the protection of the pontiff, and in the strongest terms I charge you, my brethren who have come hither for the purpose of electing a pastor, not to elect me, and you my lords the king and the archbishop, not to assent to such election; and, that nothing may be attempted against me in this behalf, I appeal to the apostolical see!"

All present were astonished at this declaration, and one told him that he had been too hasty in his response. "I am hasty," replied he, "because I am compelled to be hasty!" adding, "I have come here from no motive of curiosity; from no desire of any temporal honour or dignity; but simply upon matters of business relating to the church of Canterbury. If I can settle these, I shall be glad; but if not, I can go home without it. But why is it proposed to take me, who am unwilling and thankless for the honour, while it cannot be doubted that there are many present who would be willing to

accept it cheerfully and with thanks. If it be done in order to remove me from my office of prior, I freely retire from that office. Willing hereafter to lead a simple life in the church of Canterbury, I voluntarily renounce that preferment. I always felt it more a burden than an honour: I certainly undertook it against my will; and unwillingly and by compulsion I have ever held it." [200]

As he said this, all were astonished at his constancy in refusing that which very many, even of religious persons, are accustomed most ardently to desire. Still it was thought that he had not expressed his willingness to resign his priorate without cause; for, as some said, the archbishop was jealous of his consistency and excellency of life, although he could not well yield to his own inclinations concerning him without some good reason; and that therefore he craftily desired, under the pretext of conferring a greater honour upon him, to remove him from his office by transferring him to some other place. And although the venerable prior had often heard this in the way of caution, he could not be induced to believe it, until he received a practical proof of it. The king and the archbishop, then, with the rest who were present, urged him to consent to the appointment; but he remained inflexible. He requested a respite for deliberation, that he might go to Canterbury, for the sake of conferring and advising with his brethren there; but he could not obtain permission, for all knew well enough, that if he once had leave to depart, he would never come back. The king ordered the prior and brethren of S. Martin of Battel to receive their abbot-elect; but on their approaching him for that purpose, he repelled them, and, in virtue of his appeal, forbade them to touch him. Thus repulsed, they stood back, their desire that he should be set over them increasing, at the same time, in proportion to his unwillingness. At length, when he could by no means be brought to consent,

[200] An instance of the *nolo episcopari* principle, of rare occurrence in any age of the church.

one of the bishops present advised the archbishop to pronounce the sentence of excommunication against him; but the venerable man, regarding him with an expression of indignation, said, "I fear neither thy sentence nor his, since I have put myself under the protection of the supreme pontiff, and appealed to the apostolical see." The king advised the king his son,[201] who happened to be present (a reconciliation having lately taken place between them), and all whom he thought to have any influence with the abbot-elect, to endeavour to bring him to acquiescence. But he withstood them all, insisting, among other excuses, upon his ignorance of secular business, and upon the loss which would accrue to the monastery if he should undertake the office of governing it. He objected, besides, that he was of a weakly constitution, and incapable of labour; and urged that it was desirable that the governors of monasteries should be robust; and, moreover, that as the church was exposed to many foes, it was incumbent upon their superiors to be thoroughly versed in secular, as well as in religious, affairs.

Odo defies the court.

The king hearing him advance these excuses, sought to bend by promises him whom he could not move by entreaties or persuasions. He represented to him that the dignities and liberties of Battel Abbey were greater than those of any other church or monastery of the realm; alluded to the love and regard he had hitherto manifested in the preservation of those privileges entire; and declared that he would even exercise an increased affection and regard, if he would consent to undertake what was proposed to him. He promised him a peaceful and quiet life in the monastery, while he himself would protect and defend him and his affairs in every way against all who should seek to injure them, and

The king holds out promises to Odo, on condition that he will accept office.

[201] "Henry, then styled Rex, during his father's lifetime," a not unusual practice at the period.

guarantee both him and them against damage, whenever he would inform him by some brother or servant of the Abbey of any emergency in its concerns. But Odo remained inflexible, and was no more moved by these promises, than he had before been by persuasions. He even begged that he might go into exile, without any hope of returning, choosing rather, as he said, to live in peace in some cloister, in a foreign land, than to be involved in secular cares in his own. Thus by turns the king and his adherents urged, and he intreated, neither yielding to the other's wishes; and thus (so much time did the business occupy) the day hastened to its close. Still the king, unwilling to recede, was as indefatigable in his suit, as he was determined in his non-compliance.

Odo calling to mind the example of Theophilus,

When the time had been thus consumed in vain labour, every resource of human wisdom seemed to have failed in inclining him, unless assisted by that which is divine. But him whom an earthly power could not draw to the pleasure of its will, a divine influence suddenly and easily overcame. For on a sudden, the acts of Theophilus, who denied Christ, occurred to his recollection. This man had previously been of such excellent character, that the clergy and people of the church of God had elected him bishop, but he rashly and obstinately refused the pastoral care of the church to which he had been called, and consulted his own views rather than the common benefit. Thus, in offending the church, he offended Christ, the church's bridegroom. At this his offended Lord, in his wrath, gave him over to the desires of his own heart, which he had conceived in opposition to Him, that he might walk in his own inventions, while He withdrew his protecting hand, and left him to his own frailty. Deprived of divine support, and being some time afterwards removed from the subordinate honour and office which he had hitherto held, by the bishop whom the church had elected on his refusal, he first had occasion to

mourn over his degradation, without the remedy of divine consolation; he then fell into a state of sullenness; sullenness was succeeded by despair; and in his despair he professed allegiance to the devil, under his own handwriting, thus denying Christ! This instance occurring, I say, to Odo—doubtless by the inspiration of God—the venerable prior revolved it in his mind, and, placed in this anxiety of spirit, began to entertain fears that if he should offer any further resistance to this vocation, something similar to the acts of Theophilus, or even worse, might befall himself.

and St. Anselm,

He recollected, too, the case of the blessed Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury, who had formerly assumed a religious habit in the monastery of Bec, where from the very beginning of his conversion he had demeaned himself in all things so uprightly, so discreetly, so worthily, and so laudably, that in process of time—the prior of the establishment being dead—the whole brotherhood desired to set him over the monastery with the name and office of prior. But judging himself unworthy, and unequal to so great a task, he declined to comply with their wishes, and begged them to excuse him, and elect a more suitable person. But as the whole convent were so determined upon his election, that they would transfer it to no one else, he applied to the venerable Maurilius, then archbishop of Rouen, as a man of discretion, to consult him as to how he should act in the matter. The archbishop hearing that the convent were agreed concerning him, enjoined him, in virtue of his obedience to himself, to acquiesce in their wishes; and further commanded him, by all the authority he was possessed of, that if he should, at any future period, be canonically called to higher offices, he should not resist such call. For, as he asserted, it had frequently happened, that if a wise man qualified to rule and benefit others had not assented to the call of the church, the Lord had in anger withdrawn His favour from him, and permitted him to fall into some crime detestable alike to God and man.

Hence it would appear reasonable to every wise man, that the common advantage of many should be studied rather than one's own private views, however correct they might seem to himself.

Affected by such thoughts as these, the discreet and prudent Odo was in a great strait—for while he deemed it dangerous not to consent to so solemn an election, he felt that to comply would be entirely at variance with his designs and wishes. He was the more concerned, because both the kingdom and the priesthood seemed to have concurred in his election, which was proposed by the king, and the king his son, as well as by the chief men of the realm, and urged by the metropolitan archbishop with his suffragans, and by the prior of Battel Abbey, with the brethren who accompanied him. What, then, could he do? At length, overcome by their earnest entreaties, or rather by a religious fear, though he did not actually pronounce his assent to their election, yet he withdrew his opposition, and silently yielded himself to their will and purpose. The archbishop immediately commenced, in lofty strains, the hymn "Te Deum laudamus" (which is rarely sung at the election of abbots); and after the accustomed prayer, confirmed the election. Thus was he elected on the 6th of the ides of July, amidst the tears and lamentations of all the monks and others who had accompanied him thither from Canterbury. *relents.*

Whether it was by the design of Heaven, or by human contrivance that he thus came to be elected, we know not; but whether it was of God's procuring or of man's, it was by no means unsuitable, that one who thought he was about to receive merely the *form* of the charters of Battel Abbey, should receive the monastery itself, with all its charters and dignities, into his own government and direction. The charters of Battel Abbey proved of no advantage on this occasion to the church of Canterbury, since they were neither produced nor asked for; nor indeed was any mention made of them, as to

whether they were at hand, either by the king or the archbishop. They were therefore carried back to the Abbey, untouched, while all the brethren rejoiced at their much-desired reception. No blame accrued on this account to the abbot-elect, although the business of the church of Canterbury was left untransacted; for when anyone is compelled to act on his own behalf, he will necessarily be the less able to attend to other matters. He came thither fully bent on the business of the abbey, but was compelled by his personal necessities to omit it. He was frequently afterwards heard to assert that but for the occurrence of those things which we have mentioned to his recollection, which induced him to apprehend the wrath of the Most High King, neither the approbation and favour, nor even the fear, of any earthly power, would have ever brought his mind to consent to his election.

The deputies return to Battel,

Everything connected with that election being finished, the king did not demand from him the usual oath of fidelity, knowing that he would not comply, and moreover that he would seek occasion from such demand to renounce his election. The prior and brethren of Battel having fulfilled their commission, regarding him as duly appointed over them, begged to know his commands, desiring to console his grief, and promising him all obedience and reverence. He therefore commanded them to return home together, and expressed his intention of going to Canterbury, when, having taken the advice of the brethren of that church, of whose sincere affection towards him he entertained no doubt, he would abide by their judgment, whether he should utterly renounce his election or whether he should yield his full assent to it, since he had not yet quite decided which alternative he was most inclined to. At his command the prior and brethren returned to the monastery, informed the convent of all that had transpired, and excused themselves for not having done concerning the election what had been enjoined upon them, which they had found impossible. By

the divine will, the whole congregation yielded a ready assent to all that had been done, regarding it as the appointment of God, and rejoicing and exulting while they entertained great hopes that that which had so good a beginning would have an equally happy conclusion. They were unanimous in their joy that so great a man was to be set over them, especially as he had not been brought to consent by motives of ambition, but had been obtained by canonical election.

and Odo to Canterbury.

Odo himself went to Canterbury, whither the report of what had been done preceded him. There he found the whole convent giving way to grief and lamentation, and unanimously expressing their regret that so great a man was about to be taken from them and sent elsewhere. He began at once to ask the advice of all, especially that of the more judicious of the brethren and those with whom he was most intimate, as to whether he should accept or reject the office. Some advised him from the dictates of reason, others from those of inclination. At length, however, it was the prevailing and general advice, not to resist an election which appeared to have proceeded from the will of God, but rather, earnestly to beseech Him that their present mourning might be turned into joy.

The monks send messengers to prevent the submission of the new abbot to Canterbury.

The archbishop coming a few days afterwards to Canterbury, certain of the brethren who had been present at the election were sent thither by the convent of Battel, to entreat that their new abbot might be freed from all subjection to the church of Canterbury. On their arrival they were introduced into the chapter-house of the monastery, where the whole congregation was present, the archbishop presiding. As soon as they had brought forward their commission concerning the exemption of their abbot, desiring that he might be specially absolved from the profession which he had there made as a monk of the establishment, the abbot-elect himself came forward, and declared that he by no means

wished for such an absolution. For he feared that by such a step he should entirely alienate himself from the church of Canterbury, which he loved beyond all other churches, as that in which he had assumed a religious habit, and in which he had dwelt from his youth; and he judged that his honour and dignity would be diminished rather than augmented if by such exemption he should render himself an alien from it. The archbishop, too, commending his pious affection for that church, would by no means comply with the request of the brethren, but charged the abbot not hereafter to suffer his tried affection to grow cold; but, if the church of Canterbury should require his aid and counsel, to yield it the obedience and goodwill of a devoted son. At length he offered prayer and gave the benediction, and spoke much in the presence of all, committing him entirely to the above-mentioned brethren, and charging them as devoted sons to love their worthy father with a becoming affection, to pay him honour and reverence, to attend to his precepts and admonitions, to endeavour to imitate his example—and thus they would doubtless find favour with God and honour among men. The brethren then received him as a divine gift, rejoicing the more since they were now certain of him, giving glory to God, and promising him all love and obedience.

Odo goes to Battel.

A few days subsequently, he bade farewell to all, amidst the regrets both of the monks and the citizens, whom he had been accustomed, in honied words, to instruct in the keeping of the heavenly mandates, and so took his journey to Battel, where he arrived the day before the nones of August, the whole convent going forth to receive him in solemn and joyful procession. When he reached the Abbey, prayer was made, and he received the whole congregation with the kiss of peace, and was thus conducted to the chapter-house, to hear the rule of S. Benedict for the ordination of an abbot. But a great concourse of people, attracted by the fame of so eminent a man, followed him, and rushed

in with such force that they could not well be kept back; he therefore made signs to the brother who went before him to read, to desist from his lesson, and silence being thus, according to the usual custom, broken, he spoke to the following effect: the whole of the brethren being present:—

Addresses the convent.

"My dearest Brethren: From the respect which you thus outwardly offer me, I am able to estimate the pious regard for me which you inwardly entertain. For no previous deserts on my part (since we had little knowledge of each other) you have judged it desirable to have me, though but little suited, or rather, as I frankly confess, entirely unworthy—you have wished, I say, to have me set over you with the name and office of pastor; you have urged me against my will, until you have at length brought me unwillingly and by compulsion to some degree of consent. I confess that even now my mind wavers, and that I have not fully decided upon accepting the office. You have now received me in coming among you with such great solemnity, that if it had been any one who is accustomed to delight in temporal honours, he could not have justly complained of anything in this respect. But although I am not unmindful of your kindness towards me, yet as my mind constantly reverts to the church of Canterbury, from whose most delightful breast I grieve that you have torn me, I confess that I am in doubt whether I owe you my thanks, or, in consideration of the trouble I have incurred through you, my ill-will. The honour paid me however I regard as offered not so much to my unworthy self as to God, the chief pastor; for in my humility ye have received Him, whose services you desire me to perform in your midst. For He declares himself to be accepted or rejected in his followers, and to those who receive a prophet or a just man in the name of a prophet or just man, he promises the reward of a prophet and a just man. If He has decreed that I should preside over you, may he vouchsafe that I may be enabled worthily to lead you in

the pastures of his flocks, and without detriment to myself to bring him much profit from you."

He said this, with much more to the same purpose, with tears, and drew the hearts of all the brethren towards him. Not only those who attended upon him, but likewise the crowds that came flocking about him, were delighted, because that gracefulness of virtue which he possessed inwardly in his mind, was apparent outwardly in his countenance. But not to dwell too long upon these matters, all things which were deemed necessary upon his reception being concluded, and all who had assembled being dismissed to their homes—as well those who had gone out to welcome his arrival, as those who had sorrowfully accompanied him from Canterbury,—he turned his attention from that time towards the brethren, setting before all an example of holy living, both in word and deed, and studying by all means to become more the object of affection than of dread.

Being thus elected and received into the monastery, it only remained to obtain consecration from the bishop. But since it had come to his knowledge, that his predecessors had experienced frequent and manifold vexations from the bishops of Chichester, he resolved to be very careful not to do any thing, either in receiving consecration or in professing obedience, which might bring the like, or worse, results upon himself. In the meantime there came to him from John bishop of Chichester, Jordan the dean, with some of his fellow-canons, that they might consult together respecting his consecration, and ascertain his views. The cause of their visit being fully explained, he stated to them the method and order of his election by the kingdom and the priesthood, and declared that he would do nothing without the knowledge of the king and the archbishop; for as the liberties of the abbey were vested in him, it was proper that the abbot-elect should be consecrated in his own abbey, as the first

The bishop of Chichester, as usual, interferes about the benediction of the new abbot.

abbot, Gausbert, had been by the bishop of Chichester. And in order to strengthen that assertion, he caused the charters containing that fact to be exhibited to them.

Having dismissed those clerks, he soon after applied to the king and the archbishop, and explained the position of affairs, avowing his intention not to do anything rashly, by which he might endanger the privileges of the abbey. Those who were about the king would fain have persuaded him to cause the abbot to be consecrated in his own presence, by any one of his bishops he might choose, lest if the rite should be performed elsewhere, in the king's absence, some cavil might be raised against him by the bishop and canons of Chichester, by which he might afterwards be subjected to annoyance. For as no one would ever attempt such annoyance in the face of the king, all things could be peaceably arranged, and a memorial would remain to after times of the king's pious affection towards, and protection of, the monastery, which is the pledge of his royal crown.

The abbot applies to the king;

The king appeared willing to take this advice; Richard, archbishop of Canterbury, however, sought and obtained permission to consecrate the abbot, disavowing, at the same time, any intention of seeking thereby to establish a custom, or a subjection to himself, but merely to manifest a pious regard, which he acknowledged he entertained for the abbot-elect. The day fixed was a Sunday, the day before the feast of S. Michael, and the abbot-elect, now ready more fully to assume the name and office of an abbot, came to Malling,[202] a manor of the archbishop, situated

and obtains consecration from the archbishop,

[202] South Malling, a suburb to Lewes. A collegiate church, dedicated to St. Michael, existed here in Saxon times. It is said by Leland to have been founded by Ceadwalla, the West Saxon king, who attached this and several other churches in Sussex to the church of Canterbury, and they still, after the lapse of nearly twelve hundred years, remain subject to the primate, under the appellation of *peculiars*. The archbishops had a seat here, or rather, perhaps, a temporary domicile, with the dean and canons of Malling, whose establishment existed up to the period of the Reformation. Theobald and Thomas à Becket were among the benefactors to this deanery. Scarcely any remains of the edifice now exist.

near Lewes, where he was honourably entertained by that functionary and his friends, and received consecration, without any profession of obedience or any questions being asked upon the subject. From thence he returned the next day (being as we have said Michaelmas day) to his abbey, where he was met by a procession comprising the entire convent, who received him with great exultation, now that they knew it was finally settled for him to remain among them.

at Malling, near Lewes.

And now he began to be more devout than ever in his prayers, more ardent in divine contemplations, more frequent in his vigils, more energetic in exhortations and in works worthy of imitation, and more frequent in preaching; thus becoming a pattern in word and deed of a holy life to all. Rich in the bowels of compassion, he relieved every one who sought his assistance. His hospitality knew no respect of persons; the abbey-gates stood open for all comers who needed either refreshment or lodging. For those persons whom the rule of the establishment forbade to sleep within the abbey, he provided entertainment without the circuit of its walls. In all divine offices in the abbey, in reading and in meditation, he associated with the brethren in the cloister; he took his food in the refectory; in short, he was as one of themselves, except that he did not sleep in the common dormitory. For he suffered from a perpetual constipation of the stomach, with which he had been afflicted above measure from his youth, so that he could not obtain natural relief without the use of medicines, nor even then without difficulty. And he was so excessively modest on these occasions, that he would not allow any one to be within sight or hearing. On this account therefore he slept out of the dormitory of the brethren, but in all other respects he was like one of themselves. In his carriage, his actions, and his habits, there was nothing of pride, and nothing that savoured of levity; he was ever

Excellent life of Abbot Odo.

mindful of what was good, not only before God but also before men. He possessed a discreet modesty and a modest discretion to tolerate the frailties common to men, and to become all things to all men; unwilling to be overcome of evil, he sought rather to overcome evil with good.

The abbot expounds the scriptures in three languages.

As to his expositions of the holy scriptures and his treatises, whatever the subject, and whether reduced to writing or preached for the edification of his hearers —sometimes in Latin, sometimes in French,[203] and often for the benefit of the unlearned common people in the mother tongue—he was so lucid, so eloquent, and so agreeable to all, that what appeared obscure, or had been but imperfectly handled by the antient doctors, he rendered perfectly intelligible. And though he sometimes spoke at great length, his hearers were so much delighted with the suavity, both of his person and his speech, that they never grew weary of his prolixity. And the devotion of the faithful was excited by his ministrations so much the more, because they saw that he did not preach one thing and practise another; for what he uttered with his lips he carried into effect in his conduct. His private life and his strict piety towards God we commit to the Searcher of hearts, while we confine ourselves to the manner in which he conducted himself in the execution of his abbatial functions.

Visits Canterbury.

After he had received consecration and confirmation in his pastoral charge from the archbishop and had resided some days in his abbey: and after Benedict (who was subsequently abbot of Peterborough)[204] had been appointed his successor as prior of Christ Church, he was invited to visit Canterbury. There he was as solemnly received in procession, by the whole body of monks, and the citizens, and by

[203] "This is undoubtedly the same abbot who composed a gloss on the Psalter found by Leland in the library of Battel Abbey. Collect. iii, 38." (Note in *Lat. Edit.*)

[204] He was elected abbot of Peterborough 1177, and died 1194. (*Chron. Petroburgense.*)

a vast multitude of people of both sexes, as if an angel from heaven had been announced to be present. Having staid there a few days, he went to the royal court, where he was so much honoured by the king that the latter permitted one Roger, a monk of Canterbury, to be made abbot of S. Augustine's monastery there, although a perfect stranger to him, simply upon the abbot's recommendation. For although Roger had from the beginning various mediators and intercessors with the monarch, his consent could not be procured until he received the assurance of the abbot, in whom he put great confidence, that he was a man of honourable character, and knew that the abbot had had experience of his correct deportment while subject to his authority as prior of Canterbury. After the promotion of this personage, the above-mentioned Benedict, prior of the church of Canterbury, happened to incur the king's displeasure. But at the intercession of the abbot, who undertook to mediate between them, the king again received the prior so much into his favour that in process of time he promoted him to the abbacy of Peterborough. We mention this, the more clearly to shew in how great respect, esteem, and honour he was held by the king himself, and by people of every rank.

Procures the renewal of a decayed charter.

It happened, at this time, that one of the charters of King William, the founder of the monastery, was worn out with age. The abbot, therefore, showed it to the king, who said: "This ought to be renewed." To this the abbot replied: "If it please your royal authority, we desire that it may be confirmed by renewal." "I cannot," returned the king, "do this without the sanction of my court." Upon this the abbot left the king, and going to that illustrious personage, Richard de Lucy, told him what the king had said. Richard replied: "If *our* judgment be expected upon this matter, you will get the unanimous consent of the whole court to your petition." By the advice of this nobleman, a proper time and place were waited for, when

after a little, as the king was sitting in the midst of his nobles, the abbot came forward, and displayed his decayed charter before them all, and begged its renewal by royal authority. The king requiring the opinion of his lords as to whether it might be done or not, De Lucy replied: "If it please you, my lord, it is becoming of you to renew this charter of the church of Battel, for even if all its charters should perish, we ourselves ought to be its charter, since by the Conquest at Battel we were all estated! And since you seek our judgment on the legality of this step, we are of opinion that you should renew the document by your authority."

Upon this the king summoned Walter de Coutances, his chancellor (who was afterwards bishop of Lincoln, and not long subsequently archbishop of Rouen [205]), and ordered a new charter, with the royal name and seal, to be made, after the form of the old one, commanding it to be recorded therein, that he had made that confirmation upon the petition of Abbot Odo, for the love of God, and in remembrance of the name and merits of the said abbot. And as it is usual in charters and muniments executed at different times, by different persons, relative to the same business, to make mention of the previous ones in the later, as if they required the support of such precedents, in words like these: "as that charter, or as the charter of such a one testifies"—the king ordered that no such clause should be inserted, but himself dictated another, not before used, and bearing testimony in his own person, in addition to those things which he had seen, ordered it to be written in the charter, thus: "Whereas I have inspected the charter of William, my great-grandfather, in which are contained the before-written liberties, quittances, and free customs granted by him to the foresaid Abbey," &c. Neither did this noble prince disdain to give his reason for this expression.

[205] Surnamed the *Magnificent*, on account of his great property and his beautiful erections. He is supposed to have been founder of the archiepiscopal palace of Alihermont. (*M. L'Abbé Cochet*, in *Revue de Rouen*, Feb. 1849.)

"If," said he, "the suppressed clause were inserted, the latter charter would confer little without the former. But now, no mention being made of precedents, this document would be sufficient, even if all the other charters of Battel should perish." These things having been said, the abbot requested and obtained from the chancellor, three several charters, of one and the same form, to be written according to the king's command, with his seal affixed to each. In this the abbot had a prudent regard to the interests of his Abbey, that (since the possessions of the monastery are for the most part remote from it) if it should happen that one or even two of the charters should on any account be carried out of the Abbey, he might have at least one of them always ready at hand.

Appropriation of the parish church of Battel.

Within the four years during which, as we have said, the Abbey remained, after the death of Abbot Walter, without a pastor, Humphrey, a priest, and parson of the church of S. Mary at Battel—which is adjacent to the walls of the Abbey, and considered parochial—departed this life. The prior and convent, though deprived of a pastor, took the church into their own hands, receiving, without obstruction, the revenues arising from it—a certain chaplain performing the duties of a vicar, though without any fixed appointment. There were many eager though unsuccessful applicants for the church. Among these was Richard, archdeacon of Poitou, afterwards bishop of Winchester, who wrote to the prior and convent earnestly requesting it, making his demand with the more boldness, because he was a person of great power. But the prior and convent having conferred together, wrote in reply, that the church was a chapel to the Abbey, so that its altar was reckoned as one of the Abbey's own altars; and that the chaplain therein ministering ought to be acquainted with the affairs of the monastery, as if he were one of its monks,[206] and

Applicants for the vicarage.

[206] In the margin is added, "*qualis debeat esse Decanus.*" At a subsequent period, the style of dean was accorded to the incumbent of S. Mary's; upon what ground it would be

on that account to be a most trustworthy person. For this and similar reasons, they would grant the church to no one except he would serve it in his own person.

At this reply the archdeacon desisted from his suit; but one Alfred de S. Martin, who executed the office of steward of the rape of Hastings[207] under the Earl of Eu, obtained letters from the king, then beyond the seas, to the prior and convent, desiring that they would give the church to one Thomas, his chaplain. But the whole body of the brethren received the mandate with dislike, and by unanimous consent the sacristan of the monastery, Robert de Chaam, who was upon friendly terms with Alfred, was sent abroad to him, in order to employ every means to dissuade him from vexing them by the urgency of his petition, and to desire him to provide for his clerk in some other quarter. This brother, after a prosperous voyage, settled the business with him, for, finding it disagreeable to the whole of the brethren, Alfred withdrew his request. Upon this, other applicants likewise desisted from their entreaties, and the convent held the church without any further trouble, as long as they remained without an abbot, namely, up to the arrival of Abbot Odo, appropriating its revenues to the lights of the monastery, and principally to wax tapers, to be burnt continually before the high altar, and the host, and the relics of the saints there deposited; for, from the first foundation of the Abbey up to that time, lamps supplied with dirty and fœtid oil had been burnt before the host.

The revenues applied to lights for the Abbey.

Now, within a few days of Abbot Odo's reception at Battel, Richard, archbishop of Canterbury, primate of all England, and legate of the apostolical see, wrote to inform him that

difficult to say, since the church was not collegiate. It may be added, that, by an ecclesiastical fiction, the proprietor of the advowson, Sir G. Webster, is considered abbot of Battel, and his dean enjoys full exemption from the authority of the bishop of the diocese.

[207] Thus I beg to read, "qui in finibus Hastingensium, sub comite Augi, vicecomitis exequebatur officium." This Alfred de S. Martin was a distinguished person, and in 1176 founded the neighbouring abbey of Robertsbridge.

he was about to visit him in his legatine capacity. The abbot, therefore, knowing the cupidity of the archbishop's clerks, and fearing that he, finding the parish-church vacant, might, at their earnest importunities, take it out of his hands, determined to anticipate the archbishop's arrival. He therefore, though somewhat against the wishes of the convent, granted the benefice to a certain kinsman of his own, one John, chaplain of the church of Harietsham, upon condition, however, that he should serve the church in his own person. And in order that the convent should not take this assignation of the church amiss, from the apprehension that the lights so necessary for the honour and decency of the Abbey would be extinguished, he satisfied them upon this subject, by promising to make abundant provision for them from another source, so that nothing should be withdrawn on these grounds.

Dreading the solicitations of the archbishop's clerks,

Abbot Odo appoints one of his kinsmen to the church of Battel.

But this John being admitted to the church upon the simple advowson, and feeling secure of it, became careless as to his institution by the bishop. His mind also was more directed towards his vicarage of the church of Harietsham, where he had served for a long time, and he declared himself bound by oath to the parson of that church, as the term of his ministration had not yet expired. The presentation took place in the month of August, but he begged and obtained leave to be excused taking the church until Michaelmas, the church in the meantime being served by a chaplain ill adapted for the cure of souls, which the abbot could hardly brook. But the appointed time came and went, and still he failed to come as expected, stating that he was not yet fully at liberty, and begging a further leave of absence until the following Christmas, which was granted. At Christmas, again, he did not come, and begged a further indulgence until Easter, and this with difficulty he obtained. But when Easter was past, and he did not arrive, the abbot saw plainly enough that he

was framing empty excuses for the delay, in order that he might still officiate at Harietsham, and at the same time receive the profits of Battel church, through the services of a curate. There was said to be another reason why he avoided the abbot's presence. He was reported to be of impure life, and he feared therefore the straightforwardness of the abbot, knowing that he should be estranged from his friendship, if, living an unlawful and disgraceful life, the infamy of his incest should become known.

The abbot, therefore, issued orders that, laying aside every excuse, he should come before the Nativity of S. John the Baptist, or that he wonld take care to exclude him, and institute another to the benefice in his stead. But even then he did not comply, but went so far as to say that, after due deliberation, he would rather be absent from his parsonage of the parish church of Battel, than from the curacy of Harietsham. Upon this the abbot began to be anxious for the institution of another person, and humbly supplicated the blessed Mother of God, to whose memory the church was erected, that she would provide a suitable minister for her church. He also invited several priests of good character and reputation, both from remote places and from the neighbourhood, to come to see him, offering them the church and its revenues. But they being well established, were unwilling to exchange a certainty for an uncertainty. In the meantime, a certain deacon, named Walter, residing in Berkshire, in the bishopric of Salisbury, and a native of that shire, of honourable reputation for word and deed, in the pursuit of learning, and devoid of any church preferment, attracted the abbot's notice. Some went so far as to say that it had been revealed from heaven that he should be invited to the ministry of this church, and the place pointed out where he was to be found. The abbot therefore addressed a letter to him, desiring conference on the subject; and he, being found in the place indicated in the

Upon the refusal of John of Harietsham to reside in his benefice, he is rejected,

revelation, obeyed the invitation, and came. To him, though hitherto a perfect stranger, the abbot offered the government of the church, so that he might at the next ordination enter upon the office of the priesthood and take the duty. But the deacon, uninfluenced by any love of gain, humbly excusing himself, replied, that he was unwilling to undertake the cure of souls, for which he considered himself unqualified, as it had hitherto been his chief object to pursue scholastic learning, and that he could not presume rashly to accept so arduous an office, until he had taken the advice and assent of his friends. By these and similar excuses he endeavoured by every possible means to avoid that which many are accustomed earnestly to desire.

and Walter, a young clerk of Berkshire, is appointed to it.

The abbot strongly insisted upon his acceptance of the offered benefice, saying that it was a matter of divine rather than of human contrivance, that he had been called to the government of the church, and moreover that he would incur the displeasure of God, and of the blessed Virgin his mother, if he should thus reject a call so evidently canonical. The deacon was in a position of difficulty as to acceptance or refusal, inasmuch as by acceptance he must act in contrariety to his wishes and entirely relinquish his scholastic studies, while on the other hand by refusal he was in danger of incurring the anger of God. After a few days' deliberation, however, and the advice of certain great and prudent men, he consented, though unwillingly, and received the church from the abbot and convent, in the chapter-house of Battel, on their right of patronage. He was presented not long after to John, bishop of Chichester, who had now succeeded bishop Hilary in that see. Thus undertaking the parsonage of the church and the cure of souls, he was promoted at the next ordination to the grade of priest. From that time he served the church, and diligently instructing the people committed to him, by word and deed, became a pattern to the flock. And he so studied to lead all to the exhibition of virtue,

that it was evident that his call had been of God, who had foreseen how necessary and useful he would prove to his church.

The Cardinal Hugh (or Hugezun) summons the abbot to the council, to answer the charge of Godfrey de Lucy.

At this time it happened that one Hugh, a deacon of the Roman church and a cardinal *a latere* of our lord Pope Alexander, came as legate into England, and summoned the archbishops, bishops, abbots, and the whole clergy of the realm to a general council at Westminster, to transact the business upon which he had come, as well as to ascertain the state of the English church, and to try ecclesiastical causes. The abbot of Battel was summoned among the rest by the general edict, and the legate also issued to him a special mandate, upon the authority of the apostolical see, that he, laying all excuses aside, should appear before him to answer the complaint of Godfrey de Lucy, respecting the church of Wye, and to do what was just therein. At this message the abbot was greatly perplexed; for he was aware that, during the time that the abbacy of Battel was vacant, the king had given and confirmed this church of Wye, free from all exception, to Godfrey de Lucy, and that Godfrey had been received and instituted on the king's presentation, by Richard archbishop-elect of Canterbury, with such authority as he then possessed, and moreover that a charter had been given him by the archbishop-elect upon his institution, which, upon the latter's return from Rome after his consecration by Pope Alexander, he confirmed by all the authority he exercised as archbishop, as primate, and as legate of the apostolical see. The abbot perceived the great danger which surrounded him, for he feared that, if he should engage in legal proceedings against Godfrey, he should seem to act with disrespect in regard to a gift made by the king's authority, the archbishop's institution, and the confirmation of both, as well as towards Richard de Lucy, the father of Godfrey, and after the king, the chief magistrate of all England. If, on the other hand, he should decline an

action, the whole church of Wye, would thenceforward be adjudged without any exception to Godfrey, while the Abbey of Battel would be subject to the annual loss of ten marks. He therefore had recourse to his familiar and accustomed aids of devotion and prayer, and commending himself to the supplications of his brethren went to the king, and explained to him how he was drawn into litigation, prudently desiring to ascertain toward which side his mind appeared to lean. He entreated the king to inform him, in one word, whether he had really granted the church of Wye to Godfrey de Lucy or not, declaring at the same time that he had no wish to litigate the matter with that personage, if certainly assured of the king's donation. The king, knowing that the gift he had made was not regular, began to quibble, saying that he did not remember that he had either granted or confirmed the church to Godfrey. The abbot finding it impossible to get anything definite from the king, turned to the archbishop, demanding from him whether he had instituted Godfrey to the parsonage of Wye upon the king's presentation, and confirmed such institution by the authority he then held. The archbishop protested in strong terms that he had instituted Godfrey to that portion only of the church which William the priest, before mentioned, had held at the time of his decease; and assured him that he had nothing to fear from him. Upon this, the abbot, who now seemed able to engage in the suit upon good grounds, became only solicitous for an advocate to whom he might entrust his cause. Meeting, therefore, with a certain clerk of the archbishop's, one Master Gerard Pucelle, a most erudite and learned man, and subsequently bishop of Chester, he stated his case, praying that for the sake of the antient friendship which had subsisted between them through every change of fortune, he would undertake to defend it. But Pucelle, upon a full recital of the case, replied that it belonged rather to his lord the archbishop than to

The king prevaricates.

The abbot seeks an advocate.

himself, and that he could not defend any part of it, lest by so doing he might seem to disapprove as unreasonable the acts of his own master. He having thus excused himself, the abbot applied to Master Bartholomew, bishop of Exeter, another old friend, requesting that he with his clerks would espouse his cause. But the bishop knowing that it was against Godfrey de Lucy, replied that Godfrey was a priest of the church of Exeter, and that he could not espouse a cause in which he had no concern against one of his own priests. The bishop urging excuses of this kind, the abbot next went to Master John of Salisbury, afterwards bishop of Chartres, to state his case and beg his assistance. But John, too, excused himself saying, "I am a priest of Exeter, and cannot consequently do anything against Godfrey, since we are fellow priests of the same church." In this way did all those whom he looked upon as friends and allies excuse themselves. The clerks of the king and the archbishop said that the affair belonged to their respective lords, and that it was not their province to contradict the decisions of their masters. Some of the bishops and priests said that Godfrey was their priest, others that he was their fellow priest; the common and general excuse of all being that they were unwilling to incur the displeasure of Richard de Lucy, Godfrey's father.

Failing among his personal friends, he applies to an Italian lawyer, who accepts the office;

The abbot being placed in this strait, was advised to speak to a certain clerk learned in law, who had come over from Italy with the legate, to get him to undertake the advocacy of his cause, since, as he was neither a native nor an inhabitant of the king's realms, and was under no obligation, either of gratitude or friendship, to any one on this side the Alps, he feared neither king, prince, archbishop, bishop, nor any person in the kingdom, ecclesiastical or secular, in the advocacy of any cause whatever. The abbot listened to this suggestion, and meeting the clerk, stated his case, the advocacy of which the latter undertook, upon condition of receiving a mark of silver. So far secure, the abbot went to his inn to

await the trial, which was to come on the next day. But at night, when the hour of rest was come, certain persons arrived from the clerk, with a verbal message to the abbot, that he could not undertake the cause they had conferred upon, because he was unwilling to incur the displeasure of the king and the great men of the realm.

but afterwards declines it.

Having heard this and dismissed the messengers, every source of consolation seemed cut off, the abbot was in much distress of mind, and his followers were also much disquieted. It often happens, among the sorrowful, when they have no remedy for their grief, that they say or do something by which they increase their affliction. So it was on this occasion; for one of those present, a kinsman of the abbot, and on more familiar terms with him than the rest, turned to him and said: "If, my lord, you had afforded me and others of your kindred the payment of our expenses, so that we could have attended the schools, some time since, we should have become so skilled in the law and decrees, as to be able, both in the present instance and at future times, to defend you. But now we are so stupid and dull as it regards writings, that we can have no advice from among ourselves; neither can we get it from anybody else, either for prayers or money." "It very much vexes me," replied the abbot, "that I have not applied my mind to legal studies." All present then, from the necessities of nature as well as from nightly custom, retired to rest; but the abbot passed the greater part, if not the whole, of the night sleepless, and in unceasing prayer, commending himself and his cause to God and to S. Martin, and humbly beseeching him to be his advocate. After divine service the next morning, he proceeded, in simple guise, with his followers to the appointed place of trial, while the opposite party came attended by a long train of advocates. Their principal procurator and advocate was Master Ivo de Cornwall, who, coming forward, produced letters-patent from Godfrey de Lucy, then attending the schools abroad, and declared the

The abbot in great anxiety.

Ivo of Cornwall opens the pleadings.

procuration of the cause, and its authentication by Godfrey. There were present, because summoned to the council, a great body of the clergy. The legate, however, was not yet presiding, but some of his subordinates to whom he had committed the decision of the cause. Master Ivo rising, spoke as follows:—

"I trust, my lords, the judges, that it is sufficiently evident to you, from the letters-patent of my Lord Godfrey de Lucy, that he, being in foreign parts, pursuing the studies of the schools, and consequently unable to be present at this trial, has committed his cause to my care; and having undertaken that cause, I demand a hearing no less impartial than if my lord himself were present, and the more so because the cause is evidently a righteous one.

"When that venerable personage, Walter, abbot of Battel, my lord's uncle, departed this life, the disposal of the whole monastery devolved upon the king's highness, so that it was entirely in his power to bestow the government of it upon whomsoever he pleased; yet he was not disposed to present it to any one who was not canonically elected. And while as yet the king had not determined upon whom to confer the monasterial oversight, one William, a priest, parson of the church of Wye, died. Our lord the king, therefore, inasmuch as he had power to dispose of the body of the whole monastery as he saw fit, regardful of the piety and charity of my lord Godfrey, gave him this church of Wye, situated upon the lands of the abbey, and confirmed the gift by the charter which I hold in my hand; and this he did as king, as lord of the manor, and as the special patron of that Abbey beyond all the other abbeys of his realm. Nor was it unreasonable that the king should dispose of the members as he pleased, when the whole body was at his control." So saying, he exhibited the king's charter of donation and confirmation, and continued:—

"The donation being made by this right of patronage, that venerable personage Richard, archbishop-elect of Canterbury, received my lord Godfrey as incumbent, upon the king's pre-

sentation, instituted him without scruple, and with such authority as he then possessed, gave letters in proof of his institution, authenticated by such a seal as he then had in his power—for he was not yet come to full authority." Here he produced the letters alluded to, and said: "See the evidence of the archbishop-elect, who afterwards, on going to the apostolical see, and being there solemnly consecrated by the pope, returned, at length, with the full power of an archbishop, primate, and legate; and being thus invested with an authority superior to that which he had previously enjoyed, he strengthened his former act by a new institution and confirmation." So saying, he exhibited the archbishop's charter —the archbishop himself being present at the time—before the eyes of all, and went on: "While, therefore, my Lord Godfrey has obtained, upon such excellent authority, not a portion merely, but the whole of this church of Wye, with full rights, the abbot and monks of Battel, in opposition to both royal and archiepiscopal authority, hold back a moiety of the living. Now, then, according to the full gift of the king, and the full institution of the archbishop, I demand full possession; and if the evidence already adduced be not sufficient, I am provided with more. And full possession being had, if any question arises against us, I am ready to reply to the abbot and monks, and to make satisfaction according to due course of law."

The abbot amazed at his speech.

The abbot, astounded at these arguments, stood devoid of human counsel, relying only upon divine assistance. When called upon for his reply, he besought those whom he regarded as friends kindly to come to his counsel; but they all excused themselves as before; so that no one of all that were present, except his own attendants, stood forth to render him any advice or assistance; for none could venture to stand by him when they saw what interests were at stake, for fear of the king, the archbishop, and Richard de Lucy.

Waleran archdeacon of Bayeux,

Now there was present, among others, Master Waleran, archdeacon of Bayeux, and subsequently

bishop of Rochester,[208] then dependent upon the archbishop of Canterbury, and he was sitting side by side with Master Gerard Pucelle. He, seeing the abbot placed in this difficult position, and moved, as it is believed, by a divine influence, turned to Gerard and said: "Master Gerard, shall we all leave the abbot of Battel thus unprotected? He who shall fail him in this time of need may incur God's displeasure." Then rising and seizing Gerard with a friendly violence, he drew him after him: "Let us go," said he, "and assisting the abbot by our counsel, espouse his cause." Both coming thus unexpectedly to the rescue, the abbot became more tranquil, and felt more secure of his claim. They did not waste much time in conference, but returned together to the place where the judges were sitting, where Master Gerard, at the suggestion of Master Waleran (and both under God's influence) stood forward in a spirit of boldness, fearless alike of the king, of the archbishop his master, of the princes, and of all their abettors, and with ready speech expressed himself on behalf of the abbot, as follows:—

and Gerard Pucelle espouse his cause.

"As those things which have been lawfully begun, ought to be carried forward to perfection, so ought those which have been rashly attempted to be either revoked or amended. It has been alleged on the other side, that when the Abbey of Battel was deprived of its pastor, the entire disposal of the monastery devolved upon the king; and that in the meantime the king gave to Master Godfrey de Lucy the vacant church of Wye, situated upon the lands of the Abbey; and that my lord of Canterbury, first elect and afterwards archbishop, received him, upon the king's presentation, and instituted him to the parsonage of that church. To this our reply is, that, with all respect for our lord the king, the

Pucelle's speech.

[208] "He was domestic chaplain of Richard, archbishop of Canterbury, which makes his advocacy on this occasion the more generous and disinterested. He was elected to Rochester in 1182, and died in 1184. See Wharton's Ang. Sac. i, 346. Godwin, p. 528." (*Note in Lat. Ed.*)

secular power possesses no jurisdiction in matters ecclesiastical. And although at the time when the Abbey was vacant the king may have appeared entitled to some right to its management, still he had no power to do anything to the detriment of the monastery or of the future abbot, nor to change or alienate, or otherwise dispose of anything, but to keep all things, in order to restore them unimpaired to the future abbot. There ought, consequently, to have been no donation made by the king of the church of Wye, situated as it is upon the lands of the Abbey; for he, being less a patron than a guardian of the vacant convent, held in it no private right; neither ought he to have made a donation by any other right. Since, therefore, the donation is void, it is quite certain that the presentation also ought to be of no effect; for he who could not give ought not to have presented. The presentee is said to have been admitted by the lord-elect of Canterbury; but although, for the reason assigned, the institution was irregular, and consequently void, yet he neither was nor could be admitted upon any other consideration; for since the election of the archbishop was not yet confirmed by the supreme pontiff, he had no power to admit or to institute. The archbishop having been consecrated by the pope, and having returned from the apostolical see in possession of full power, is said to have done more solemnly what had been imperfectly done before, and to have confirmed it by episcopal authority. But no confirmation could or ought to be made, for at his consecration all his previous acts had been annulled by the pope. Since, then, the presentation and the institution of the presentee had been made while as yet the archbishop was merely *elect*, and since all things were revoked as void upon his consecration, it is clear that whatsoever was done in the present business is included under that general revocation, and is consequently of no effect. Now, since the power of a bishop is acknowledged to be little or nothing as compared with the apostolical authority, those things which are dissolved by the superior functionary, can receive no force through one of inferior rank. On a careful review, therefore,

of the whole of the proceedings, it appears that as all things have been done to the prejudice of ecclesiastical rights, they deservedly fail of their purpose, because they do not stand upon the basis of ecclesiastical firmness. The other party demand the benefit of a full institution, when, in fact, they deserve rather to be deprived of their portion, because it is manifest that they really possess no reasonable title to this church of Wye. The vacant monastery has been deprived of its right; and those unjustly deprived are not bound to reply until they are reinstated in their rights; wherefore the abbot, acting on behalf of his monastery, demands such restitution, and is prepared afterwards to do full justice."

When Master Gerard had concluded his speech in the hearing of all present, and had proved his allegations by authorities from the laws and decrees, too long for insertion here, and when sentence should have been pronounced according to the statements of the contending parties, the judges who had been appointed, deferring to the opposite side (doubtless on account of their power), reserved their judgment, and recommended an arrangement between the parties.

A compromise agreed to.

The abbot, who was more desirous of peace than of strife and contention, on consideration of the various circumstances, determined not to refuse a compromise, feeling assured that he should lose nothing that he had possessed, and trusting that he should rather be a gainer by it. By the intervention, therefore, of some discreet persons, a composition was made to the effect that the tithes of *Bekewell*, and *Beawerdregge*, and *Holeford*, antiently assigned to the sacristy of Battel, should still be appropriated to that use, and that, for the future, Godfrey de Lucy should hold the whole church of Wye, as perpetual curate, under a pension of fifteen marks annually, payable to the Abbey. And as Godfrey, as we have already mentioned, was at the time abroad, it was decided that, on his return, he should visit the monastery in person, for the purpose of resigning all the

instruments he held in the name either of the king or the archbishop, respecting the said church, and of receiving a document by which the composition should be rendered binding upon the monastery alone.

In this manner was the composition made and approved on both sides, and the abbot, giving thanks to God and S. Martin, returned home, joyful in the security of his cause. Being asked by those who congratulated him on his success, if he now regretted his want of skill in decrees and laws, he cheerfully replied, "There is no law so good—no decree so efficacious as the psalm, 'Have mercy upon me, O God.'" [209] We mention this in order that we may clearly show the great devotion in prayer of one who had learned that he could obtain more by the outpouring of supplication before God than by any eloquent arguments of men. We have besides treated the more largely on this subject, because we thought it attributable to divine interposition and the prayers of the abbot, that whereas, a short time before, the whole kingdom and priesthood were publicly opposed to him, or at least could not be induced to render him advice or aid, either for entreaties or for money, yet now on a sudden such an unexpected protection was divinely vouchsafed, that the power in which the adverse party confided was cast down, and the multiplicity of their advocates confounded.

Godfrey unwillingly consents.

Godfrey de Lucy, on hearing of these proceedings, although he did not much approve of them, durst not shrink from the form of the compromise. On his return from abroad, therefore, he went in his own person to Battel Abbey, and having resigned all his instruments, [received] a charter of confirmation according to the form prescribed by [210]

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[209] There are several psalms beginning with these words; the one intended by the abbot is probably the LVI.

[210] *The manuscript is unfortunately defective.*

SUMMARY

OF

The History of Battel Abbey,

SUBSEQUENTLY TO THE EVENTS NARRATED IN THE FOREGOING "CHRONICLE."

THOSE who have, with any degree of interest, perused, in the foregoing pages, the recital of the origin of this famous Monastery, and the chequered events of its history during the first century of its existence, will probably feel some curiosity as to its subsequent fortunes and ultimate downfall. For their gratification, the following pages have been compiled from that stupendous monument of literary industry, Dugdale's *Monasticon Anglicanum*, and other authentic sources. As the history of a kingdom is to a great extent developed by that of its sovereigns, so the annals of a monastery are principally exhibited in the lives of its successive abbots. In the succeeding brief account, therefore, I have given such particulars as I could glean of the rulers of the Abbey, which involve most of the main features of the history of the establishment itself.

For the sake of making the list of Abbots complete from the Foundation, I shall prefix the names and dates of those dignitaries who presided at Battel during the period comprehended by the Chronicle, with references to the body of the work for biographical statements.

Robert Blancard, a monk of Marmoutier, was the first who received the appointment; but as he was drowned on his return to England to take the reins of office (page 12), the honour of "first abbot of Battel" is usually accorded to his successor,

Gausbert, another monk of Marmoutier, who commenced his rule in 1076, and died in 1095. The Oxford MS. places his election in 1078, and his death in 1097, but these dates are both clearly wrong. For the events of his time, see p. 12 to p. 46.

A.D. 1095, the Abbey was dedicated, in the presence of William Rufus, in the year of Gausbert's decease.

According to some authorities his successor was one *Walter*, who died immediately after his election; but the silence of our Chronicle on the subject induces us to accept as the next abbot,

Henry, prior of Canterbury, who was elected in 1096, and died in 1102. (P. 47.) After his death there was a vacancy of several years, during which the Abbey was under the care of Custodes.

Ralph, a monk of Caen, elected 1107, died 1124. (P. 57.)

Warner, a monk of Canterbury, installed 1124. Resigned his office in 1138, and retired to the priory of Lewes. (P. 67.)

Walter de Lucy, elected 1139, died 1171. The history of his government is fully detailed in our Chronicle. After his death the Abbey was again vacant for four years. (P. 72.)

Odo, prior of Canterbury, elected 1175. He was in office at the date of the termination of our Chronicle. We have seen, in the latter portion of that work, something of the sanctity of his character. Leland, in his *Collectanea*, describes him as a very learned man, and the friend, not only of the famous John of Salisbury, but also of Thomas à Becket, archbishop of Canterbury. On the same authority we learn that he was buried (in March, 1200) in the lower part of the Abbey church, in a tomb of black or Lydian marble. After

his death the people regarded him as a saint. Leland adds, "The abbot of Battel told me that he had a written Life of Odo." [1] Two of Odo's own works were preserved in the Abbey library at the time of the dissolution.

John de Dubra, or Dover, another Canterbury monk, succeeded on the calends of May 1200. During his abbacy, King John conferred a charter, empowering the monks to enjoy the custody of their establishment during any vacancy of the abbotship. For this they paid 500 marks.

That monarch paid several visits to Battel Abbey, and in 1200 gave to the church "a certain small piece of the sepulchre of our Lord, which had been brought (from Palestine) with other relics, by his brother, King Richard" (Cœur de Leon).

In 1206, April 6, he was again at Battel, and was hospitably entertained by the brethren. On this occasion he offered upon the high altar a fair vestment, or casula. He paid the monastery a third visit on Thursday, 13th June, 1212, and a fourth on Thursday, April 25, 1213.[2] Abbot John died on the 12th of the calends of July, in the latter year. After his decease the Abbey was some time vacant, when

Hugh was elected. This personage was made bishop of Carlisle in 1218. "I do not know," says Willis,[3] "whether he held the abbacy in commendam with his bishoprick; but this is certain, that he died anno 1223, at an abbey in Burgundy, on his return from Rome, and that his successor in the abbacy was Richard." The *Annals of Dunstaple* place Richard's accession in 1218; but, from the researches of Mr. Blaauw,[4] it is evident that

Richard (who had previously been almoner of the Abbey), was elected in 1215, if not in the preceding year, On Jan. 22,

[1] Leland Collect., ed. 1770, vol. iv, p. 68.
[2] Sussex Arch. Coll., ii, 135.
[3] Hist. Mitred Abbeys, i, 35.
[4] Sussex Arch. Coll., ii, 136.

and two following days of that year, King John was at Knepp Castle, in Sussex, and during his sojourn there, Hugoline, precentor of Battel, accompanied by two other monks of the house, applied to him, and obtained his approval of their newly-elected abbot, Richard. He died on the 3d of the calends of August, 1235.

Ralph de Coventry, formerly cellarer of the establishment, was the next abbot. The royal assent was given to his election 6th November, 1235. His successor appears to have been

Reginald, prior of Brecknock, one of the Abbey's cells. He held that office so early as 1248, and was elected to the abbacy of Battel in 1261.

During this abbot's government, King Henry III visited Battel Abbey, and was hospitably received by the brethren, notwithstanding the severe exactions they had suffered at the hands of his minions, who had, under various pretexts, levied unheard of contributions on the ecclesiastics of the kingdom. A contemporary writer assures us, that the large sum of two hundred marks had thus been claimed and recovered from this convent. In the spring of 1264, when the barons were in arms against the monarch, the latter, after having seized upon the castle of Tunbridge, made his way, in the early part of May, towards the coast of Sussex. Some particulars of his march, hitherto unpublished, are narrated in a MS., probably written by a monk of Battel, and may here be cited.

"The king went forward and hastened towards Sussex; and as he was passing Cumbwelle [Combwell, a nunnery in the parish of Goudhurst], Master Thomas, his cook, going incautiously in advance of the army, was slain by a certain countryman. When the king heard of this, he caused many of the people of the country who were assembled above Flemenewell (Flimwell), whither they had been ordered by the Lord John de la Haye,[5] an adherent of the barons, to be sur-

[5] The family of De la Hay "came in with the Conqueror," and became widely dispersed in Britain. One principal branch settled at Halnaker, co. Sussex; another removed into

rounded, like so many innocent lambs in a fold, and beheaded. Thence he proceeded to Robertsbridge, where he was hospitably entertained; and afterwards to Battel Abbey, where the brethren went forth in solemn procession to meet him. But the king, putting on a wrathful countenance, demanded from the abbot a hundred marks, while Edward, his son, exacted an additional forty. For seeking occasion on every hand to inflict burdens, they alleged that certain persons had been killed at Flimwell by the abbot's men, who had been sent thither for that purpose. In the first instance, indeed, they spoke the truth; but in the second they were quite wrong, because at that time it was not in the power of lords to restrain their dependents.

"The king, pursuing his march, went forward to Winchelsea, where he and his whole army remained some days, revelling in the abundance of wine they found there;[6] for the whole country was exposed to depredation and rapine. . . . . At length the barons directing their march against the royal army . . . . the king returned to Battel Abbey, and there first heard of their advance. From thence he dispatched scouts, and, directing his course by their intelligence, set out with his forces under arms in the direction of Lewes. He lodged one night at Herst (Herstmonceux), and while his army were employing themselves in hunting and destroying the park, a certain nobleman, named Roger de Tournay, was killed by a chance blow of an arrow, which struck him in the throat." The chronicler goes on to narrate the hostile meeting

Scotland, and produced the earls of Errol and marquises of Tweeddale; while a third remained fixed in this locality. The personage referred to in the text was probably a resident of Battel. Many of the name occur in the muniments of the Abbey. One branch gave name to a seat at Netherfield, in this parish (now called *Hays* or Netherfield Toll), and became extinct about a century ago. The visitations of Sussex record another line, which was settled at Robertsbridge temp. Edw. IV, and subsequently at Glyndebourne, near Lewes, and which gave birth to William Hay, author of the *Essay on Deformity*, and other poems.

[6] Winchelsea was at this period, and long subsequently, a great *entrepôt* for French wines.

of the king and the barons at the memorable battle which he describes as happening "on the mountain which overhangs the castle of Lewes"—an event so generally known as to need no further remark here. After the "mise" of Lewes which succeeded the king's defeat, we find him again at Battel, where "the monks must have relished the spectacle of speedy retribution, which now brought the wrong-doer humiliated and harmless again to their door." [7]

A contemporary poet speaks of the merciless spoliation of the goods of the Abbey:

> "Namque monasterium quod *Bellum* vocatur,
> Turba sævientium, quae nunc conturbatur,
> Immisericorditer bonis spoliavit."

At the neighbouring abbey of Robertsbridge the outrages had been still more violent, for the monks had been threatened with death unless they would pay 500 marks to Prince Edward:

> "Monachi Cistercii de Ponte Roberti
> A furore gladii non fuissent certi,
> Si quingentas Principi marcas non dedissent,
> Quas Edwardus accipi jussit vel perissent.[8]

Abbot Reginald died at an advanced age, and was succeeded by

Henry de Aylesford, who had the temporalities of the monastery restored to him as abbot 28 May, 1281. He died in 1297.

John de Taneto, or Thanet, a monk of Canterbury, received the temporalities 30 Jan. 1297. He was an accomplished scholar, "wrote several legends, was skilful in mathematics, and set the church service to music." For some unexplained reason he resigned the abbacy in the tenth year of his government. King Edward I visited the Abbey in his time, viz. on Sept. 15, 1302.

[7] Blaauw's *Barons' War*.

[8] Ibid., from Harl. MS. 978, published in Wright's *Political Songs*, Camd. Soc.

John de Watlyngton, from his name, was doubtless born at the adjacent village of Whatlington. In 1 Edward II he held the office of seneschal to the Abbey. The royal assent to his election to the abbacy was obtained 10 March, 1307. He died, according to Willis, in 1311.

John de Northburn, or Northburne, succeeded, and had the assent of Edward II to his election, 25 May, 1311. He resigned office in 1318, and was succeeded by

John de Pevenese, a native probably of the neighbouring town of Pevensey, who had the temporalities restored to him 6 May, 1318. In Harl. MS. 6958, p. 267, he is called *Roger* de Peveno. His death was notified to the king 31 January, 1324.

At this period, and from the date of the first regular parliaments, the abbots of Battel were regularly summoned to the upper house, as spiritual peers, an honour which they continued to enjoy until the Dissolution. The few religious houses which possessed this great privilege were known by the name of *mitred abbeys*. The abbots' insignia, like those of bishops, were a mitre and crosier, with this difference, that the latter was always carried in the right hand, whereas the crosier of a bishop was borne in the left.

There is some doubt as to the name of the next abbot. The Monasticon calls him

Alan de Ketlyng, and states that he received the temporalities 28 March, 1324. Other authorities make the surname *Retling*, which may be a *literal* error, and Willis makes him *John* instead of Alan. Some suppose that they were two distinct persons, who held the abbacy in succession between John of Pevensey and Robert de Bello. Certain it is that in 12 Edw. III, Alan, abbot of Battel, received the royal license to fortify and embattle his monastery—a proceeding which indicates either a degeneracy on the part of the monks, who were thus induced to resort to carnal defences, or an increased desire on that of the secular powers to oppress and

injure them. A military furor seems to have prevailed among the ecclesiastics during this century, and we find an abbot of Battel and a prior of Lewes laying aside the pastoral staff, and assuming the sword in the repulsion of the French from our shores—a patriotic and beneficial procedure, however foreign to the ecclesiastical and monastic character.

Robert de Bello, who, from his surname, would appear to have been a native of Battel, received the temporalities as abbot 23 March, 1351, and died in 1364. During his rule, John Jose, prior of Brecknock, one of the Abbey's cells, rebelled against the authority of the parent establishment, which had hitherto exercised the right of a triennial visitation; whereupon De Bello procured a bull, enjoining obedience, from Pope Innocent VI. This document, which bears date 9 June, 1355, is preserved in the Chartulary of the Abbey. Either this abbot or his immediate successor is the only person holding the office who is known to have exercised the princely prerogative of pardoning criminals, granted by William the Conqueror. According to the Chronicle of Evesham, it appears that "in 1364 the abbot of Battel, going towards London, met a felon condemned to the gallows in the king's marshalsea, and, in virtue of his prerogative, liberated him from death. And although the king and other magnates took much offence at the act, yet, upon plea, he had his charter confirmed."

Hamo de Offynton. This abbot, who, by his surname, would appear to have been born at Offington, near Worthing, was consecrated by archbishop Islip on the 4th of the calends of January, 1364. In 1375 he was appointed visitor of the monasteries of the Benedictine order in the dioceses of Canterbury and Rochester.

This personage, from a single act of his life, has become an historical character. In 1377, the French, having taken the Isle of Wight, coasted towards Winchelsea, and Hamo hastened to defend that town from the attack. The French therefore

sent messengers to him, asking him to ransom it. To this impudent request the abbot replied, that he should not think of buying what he had not yet lost, and advised them to desist from their purpose, lest it should be so much the worse for them. The enemy next proposed to decide the matter by single combat; but to this the abbot objected that he was a religious man, and had come thither with no desire to fight, but in order to keep and defend the peace of his country. The enemy, taking this as an indication of cowardice, brought forth their engines of war, and commenced an assault, which lasted from noon till eventide; but by reason of the strenuous defence of the abbot and his followers, they had little success. While the attack was going on, they sent part of their fleet to Hastings, and finding that town almost deserted, burnt it. At length, finding their attempt upon Winchelsea fruitless, they retreated.[9]

The gallant Hamo died 23 March, 1383, and was succeeded by

John Crane, who received the temporalities 1 May following. He was succeeded by

John Lydbury, or Ledbury, who received the temporalities 1 March, 1398. He died in 1404.

William Mersh, or Meresham, formerly cellarer of the monastery, received the royal assent 16 January, 1405, and the temporalities 1 Feb. following. He died early in the year 1417.

Thomas de Ludlow, who had previously been cellarer and prior of Battel, had the royal assent to his election 11 May, and received the temporalities 30 May, 1417. He resigned in 1435.

In the time of this abbot a new "sword of maintenance" was made. The abbots of Battel had, as we have seen, the sole right of punishing criminal offences within their district, which they exercised not only within the Leuga or home territory, but also in the outlying possessions in other counties, as

[9] Thomas of Walsingham, *Hist. Angl.* ed. 1574, p. 198.

appears from the Placitae de quo Warranto. This sword, which at the dissolution came into the hands of Sir John Gage, of Firle, co. Sussex, one of the commissioners, remained in the possession of his descendants until about twenty-five years since, when it was presented by Lord Viscount Gage to the armoury of Dr. Meyrick, at Goodrich Court. It is figured and described in vol. xxii of the Archæologia, page 414. Upon the pommel are the arms of Battel Abbey, viz. a cross, with a crown in the first and fourth quarters, and a sword erect in the second and third,[10] and the abbot's initials, t . l. This relic is probably the one which became traditionally associated with the royal founder, and was considered as "the Conqueror's sword." (*See a subsequent page.*) It is the oldest weapon of the kind extant in England.

William Waller, who was probably a member of the distinguished family of that name at Groombridge, co. Kent, received the king's assent to his election, 20 June, 1435, and the temporalities 1 July following. He died on the Monday before the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin, 1437.

Richard Dertmouth was elected on the Monday preceding St. Philip and St. James's day, 1437, and received the temporalities 15 May following. His name occurs as abbot in 1461.

In the time of Abbot Dartmouth the Lord Hoo founded a chantry in the Abbey. The following extract from his will was preserved by Sir William Burrell (MS. Coll. Armor., I. 7, fol. 61):—

"I Thomas Hoo, knt., lord of Hoo and Hastinges, the xijth day of February the yere of King Henry the Sixt the xxiij, being in good mynde, make this my will and ordenaunce after the fourme that followeth; first Y will that mine feoffys & myn executors ordeyn xx^{li} marks wourth land of yerely vallue, theye to yeve it into mortmayn to the abbot and convent of Batail, and to their successors, or to yeve them money as mine executors can agree with them;[11]

[10] The following arms have likewise been ascribed to the Abbey:

1. Argent on a cross gules, a mitre in the centre, betweeu two orbs or mounds in fesse, and two crowns in pale or. (*Tanner's Notitia.*)

2. Gules, on a cross or, the text letter *x* azure; two crowns in the first and fourth quarters, and two swords, points upwards, in the second and third. (*Ibid.*)

*** Le Neve makes the letter *x* a mitre.

3. Gules, a cross argent; in the first quarter a mitre with labels; in the second a crown or. (*Procession Roll of Lords to Parliament*, 1512.)

[11] The lands are specified out of which the annuity was payable. They include, among others, lands purchased of William Lower, son of Walter Lower.

they to fynd two monkes synggyng imperpetuite at Saint Beningnys autyr in the said abbey for me and myn awncetours, and for suche personnes as myne executors wyll ordeyne."

John Newton, formerly cellarer of the Abbey, was chosen abbot in 1463, and received the temporalities 14 June in that year. He died in 1490.

Richard Toby, or Tovy, was confirmed abbot 17 Feb., 1490, received the temporalities 8 March following, and died 20 August, 1503.

William Westfelde held the office of steward to the monastery; was made prior of Brecknock in 1499; elected abbot of Battel 25 Sept., 1503; received the temporalities 3 July, 1504; and died in 1508. From his name, he would appear to have been born in an adjacent parish.

Laurence Champyon, or Campyon, received the temporalities 8 Dec., 1508.

One of the most interesting documents among the Battel Abbey muniments is a roll of the accounts of this abbot, rendered at Michaelmas, 1509. It furnishes the items of the disbursements, distributions, and rewards on the day of the late Abbot, William Westfelde's, funeral. The charge for making his grave was viij*d*. It also states the expenses attendant on his own election, creation, confirmation, and consecration. One item is 'for a printed book bought at London, viij*d*.,' and others are for rewards given 'to the players of my lord the king' (*vis*. viij*d*.), and 'to two players of my lord the earl of Arundell,' (xx*d*.)[12]

John Hamond, who was sacristan of the Abbey in 1531, is supposed to have been the next, as he certainly was the last, abbot of Battel. We find him mentioned as abbot in 1533. Five years later he surrendered this once flourishing

[12] *Thorpe's Catalogue:* where some surprise at these last items is expressed. It should be remembered, however, that the performances of these 'players' consisted of the so-called *religious* dramas, or miracle-plays, of which the monastic orders were great patrons.

establishment into the hands of Henry the Eighth's commissioners.

The history of the downfall of the monastic establishments under that redoubtable "Defender of the Faith," is too well known to require any comment in a brief and hasty summary like the present. It is sufficient for our purpose to state, that towards the end of the month of May, 1538, the royal commissioners, Sir John Gage, and Richard Layton, an ecclesiastic, arrived at Battel, in pursuance of their summary and sweeping errand.

The corruptions of the monastic orders, though very great, were doubtless overstated by those who were interested in their extinction. Battel Abbey did not escape the general censure. Fuller and Burnet charge Hamond with flagitious crimes; but this, as the editors of the *Monasticon* observe, is hardly reconcilable with the grant of 100 marks per annum made him at the Dissolution, particularly as the instrument which bestowed the pension stipulated that it should be vacated in case the king should prefer him. Nor is there any allusion to this charge (as in several other instances) in the letter of the visitors to the Lord Cromwell when the Abbey was dissolved. Let us hope, therefore, that the moral condition of Battel Abbey was no worse than that of the other monasteries, when that of the very best was bad enough. Another fact may be mentioned in vindication of Abbot Hamond, namely, that after the Dissolution he continued to reside at Battel, and was buried, by his own desire, in the chapel of St. Catherine, in the parish church.

The deed of surrender, dated 27 May, 1538, makes over to the king "the Monastery or Abbey of Battel aforesaid, and also all and singular the manors, lordships, messuages, gardens, curtilages, tofts, lands, and tenements, meadows, feedings, pastures, woods, rents, reversions, services, mills, passages, knights' fees, wards, marriages, bondmen, villains, with their sequel, commons, liberties, franchises, jurisdictions, offices,

court-leets, hundreds, views of frankpledge, fairs, markets, parks, warrens, vivares, waters, fisheries, ways, passages, void grounds; advowsons, nominations, presentations and donations of churches, vicarages, chapels, chantries, hospitals, and other ecclesiastical benefices whatsoever, pensions, portions, annuities, tithes, oblations, &c., in the counties of Sussex, Kent, Southampton, Devon, Worcester, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Berks, Oxford, Wilts, Cambridge, and elsewhere in England and Wales.

The total value of these possessions—a complete list of which is given in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*—amounted, according to Dugdale, to £880. 14*s*. 7½*d*.; but according to Speed, to £987. 0*s*. 10¼*d*. Assuming the nominal value of money to have decreased in the course of three centuries in a tenfold ratio, the annual income of the establishment must have nearly approached £10,000, at the modern appreciation.

"What the monks did with their money" is a problem of rather difficult solution; for if we allow large deductions for buildings, reparations, the salaries of bailiffs and other functionaries, as well as for the exercise of hospitality and charity, a great surplus must have remained for the actual support of the fraternity, consisting as it did of a number not exceeding that of many a private family. That they did not, like their predecessors, expend their revenues in the purchase of vestments and church furniture is clear from a letter addressed by the visitors, Gage and Layton, to the Lord Cromwell, which tells a deplorable story of internal neglect and mismanagement:

"My Lord,—Thes shal be to advertise yo^r lordshype that we haue taken thassurance for the kyng, and haue cast our bowke for the dispache of the monks and householde which amovnttithe at the leaste to on hundreth pownds. The implements off housholde be *the wurste that ev^r I se in abbaye or priorie*, the vestyments so old and so baysse, worn, raggede and torne as youre lordeshipe wolde not thynke, so that veray smale money canbe made of the vestrye. If your lordshipe send us a hundrethe pownds by this bringar, we shal make up the reste if hit be possible of this old vestrye stuffe; iff we cannot, we shal

disburse hyt till o^r^ retorne to your lordeship. The church plate and plate of the house we suppos by estymation will amounte to cccc marks or more. There is no gret store of catell. This day we be makyng an inventary. Thus our Lorde continewe yowe in honoure. From Batele Abbay, the xxvij^th^ of May.

Your lordschypes to command,
JOHN GAGE.
Yo^r^ lordshipes most humble to commaunde,
RIC. LAYTON, prest."

The following is a list of the members of the establishment at the period of its dissolution, with the pension assigned to each, from the pension-book at the Augmentation office:

"Penc' for the Monks of Battele.

John Hamond, abbot . .	c^li^ (per aunum).
Richard Salesherst, prior, bachelor in theology	x^li^ —
Clemente Westefelde . . .	vi . xiij . iv.
John Hastyng	ditto.
John Henfelde, bachelor in theology .	ditto.
John Austen	ditto.
Thos. Levett, bachelor in theology .	ditto.
Vincent Dunston	ditto.
John Benyng	vi^li^ - . -
Clement Gregorie . . .	vi . xiij . iv.
Thos. Cuthbert . . .	vi^li^ - . -
William Ambrose, bachelor in theology .	vi . xiij . iv.
Thomas Bede, bachelor in theology . .	ditto.
John Jerome . . .	vi - . -
Edward Clement	ditto.
Bartholomew Ciprian . . .	vi^li^ - . -
John Newton	ditto.
Richard Dartmowthe . . .	ditto.[13]

A novice named Richard Ladde had no pension assigned him.

[13] The nomenclature of these brethren deserves a passing remark. On entering a monastic establishment, it was the practice to lay aside the family surname, as something smacking of the external world, and to adopt another, frequently from the birthplace, or from some eminent man. At Battel Abbey, it seems to have been a favourite practice to select names renowned in the annals of the church. Thus we have in the present list, Austin, Dunstan, Gregory, Cuthbert, Ambrose, Bede, Jerome, Clement, and Cyprian. In several instances the surname adopted was that of a *former abbot of Battel*, as Westefelde, Newton, Dartmowthe. Saleherste and Henfelde appear to have taken theirs from the places of their nativity, and John Benyng his from the S. Benyng, or Benignus, who had a altar in the abbey-church.

Among the rarities preserved in the Abbey at the time of the Dissolution were—the famous **Battel Abbey Roll**, a list of the magnates who "came in with the Conqueror," a document of doubtful authenticity;[14] and a sword and royal robe, said to have belonged to William. Our Chronicle, indeed, mentions the Conqueror's bequest of his pallium; and if the garment found here in 1538 were really the one in question, it must, after the lapse of 500 years, have become as "baysse, worn, raggede, and torne" as any of the sacerdotal vestments described by the commissioners. Of the *sword* our monk says nothing, and the genuineness of that article is therefore extremely questionable. Of the monastic library—or at least of a portion of it—the indefatigable Leland has preserved a catalogue in his *Collectanea*. That famous antiquary obtained the royal permission to explore and preserve whatever MSS. he thought fit in the various Monasteries of the kingdom, and to his zealous care we are indebted for a very large amount of the treasures of this kind which have descended to us. His list of the works at Battel Abbey is subjoined:

The Gloss of Odo, abbot of Battel, on the Psalter.
Clement of Lantony on the spiritual wings and feathers of the Cherubim.
The entire Chronicle of Jordan, bishop of Ravenna. Prefixed is a list of authorities, and at the end of the work he gives the names of the barbarous nations of Germany.
A mutilated copy of Antoninus's Itinerary, in which there is nothing concerning Britain.
Mellitus, an African bishop, on the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin.
Bede on the distances of places mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles.
Bishop Martin on the four Cardinal Virtues.
Epistles of Ivo on the Body and Blood of Christ.
Gildas.
Abbot Odo's Exposition of the First Book of Kings.
Sermon of Stephen, archbishop of Canterbury, on the Assumption.
Sermons of Richard of Melksham.

[14] It is scarcely necessary to state that it has frequently been printed. See the various copies of it, with remarks, in my *English Surnames*, vol. ii, appendix, edit. 1849.

Sermons of Stephen of Canterbury.
Brother William de la Lee's Book of Chronicles.
The Responses of Albinus.
Albinus on the propriety of Sermons.
Topography of Wales and Ireland, by Sylvester Giraldus Cambrensis.
The entire Prophecy of Hildegard.
The summary of Michael de Smaulfeld.

Trans. from Monasticon, iii, 236.

The abbey was exceedingly rich in muniments, charters, royal grants, and donations, (many of which with their seals in fine preservation are still extant) official, manorial, court-baron, court-leet, and rent-rolls, registers, feoffments, &c. These, at the Dissolution, came into the hands of the grantee of the abbey lands, and, augmented by the manorial and other archives of the subsequent possessors of Battel Abbey—thus unitedly forming a history of this renowned locality during the long period of almost eight hundred years—were sold by the late Sir G. Webster, Bart., to Mr. Thomas Thorpe, the bookseller, who, after publishing a useful descriptive catalogue[15] of them, resold them to Sir Thomas Phillipps, Bart., in whose unrivalled collection at Middle Hill, bound in *ninety-seven folio volumes*, they still remain.[16]

It would be inconsistent with the design and scope of the present brief sketch to enumerate all the benefactors to this dignified establishment during its existence of almost five hundred years. Suffice it therefore to say, that the list includes, besides several kings of England, members of the distinguished families of Le Bœuf, De Fraelville, St. Leger, De Normanville, D'Eu, De Palerne, De Sumeri, De Monceux, De Bodiam, Le Despenser, De Ashburnham, De Echyngham, De Beche, Fillol, Picot, De Hastings, Fitz-Hamon, Le Hay, Moun, Manners, Mareschall, De Icklesham,

[15] In 8vo, pp. 221. London, 1835.

[16] In better *private* possession they could not possibly be, the present owner of the Abbey excepted. It is, however, matter of much regret that they should be in a collection so remote from the locality to which they principally relate.

De Basoc, De Scotney, De Crowhurst, De Bromham, Wardeux, Curteis, De Dreux, De Quincy, Finch, De Herst, Alard, and Hoo, besides a multitude of names of lower mark. Their grants principally refer to lands, &c., in the immediate vicinity of the Abbey. At the time of the Domesday Survey, Abbot Gausbert held fifteen manors in Sussex only. The manor of Battel alone contains nearly 10,000 acres, about one half of which was held in domain, and, exclusively of other possessions, formed a noble estate.

It now only remains briefly to trace the descent of the site of the Abbey subsequently to the Dissolution, from the original grantee to the present possessor.

Browne Willis, in his *History of Mitred Abbeys*, asserts that the king "bestowed the site of the church with several of the lands upon one Gilmer," who partially pulled down the buildings, and sold the materials; but this statement, which was supported by no better evidence than a local tradition, is evidently erroneous, for within three months of the Dissolution, we find that Henry, by deed dated 18 Aug. 1538, granted to Sir Anthony Browne, "the site of the late monastery or abbey of Battel," with the church, bell-tower, churchyard, edifices, &c. &c., adjoining the same. In the enumeration of the contiguous buildings and lands, we find mentioned the 'parke milne,' the lodge, the sextry, spital land, the procession strake, the vineyard, cellarer's bayles, stewmede, culvermede, almonry mede, with others bearing names referring to monastic uses and customs. The conventual church, the bell-tower, the sacristy, the chapter-house, the cloisters, and some other buildings, were soon after levelled with the ground; the remaining buildings were converted into a mansion, and as such have ever since been occupied. They comprise the great hall, the abbot's apartments, the refectory, and the noble gateway, with some additions—the whole forming one of the most stately residences in the south of England.

Sir Anthony Browne probably obtained this grant through the influence of his father-in-law, Sir John Gage, who, as we have seen, was one of the 'visitors' who procured the abbot's surrender, and who also obtained a portion of the spoils for himself.[17] Sir Anthony was subsequently created a knight of the garter and master of the horse, and dying in 1548, was buried in Battel church, where a fine monument to his memory exists.

The second wife of Sir Anthony Browne was the Lady Elizabeth Fitzgerald, daughter of Gerald, ninth earl of Kildare, whose beauty has been immortalised by Surrey, under the title of the FAIR GERALDINE, and whose residence here, as mistress of Battel Abbey, some may regard as a more interesting association with these time-honoured walls than that of a long line of shaven monks and mitred abbots.

Sir Anthony Brown was succeeded at Battel Abbey by his son Anthony, created K.G. and viscount Montagu. The most remarkable event of this nobleman's life was his embassy to Rome, soon after Queen Mary's accession, for the purpose of again placing England under the papal yoke. He died in 1592, and was succeeded by a grandson of the same name, who became second viscount Montagu, and whose son Francis, third viscount, died in 1682. The estates of this peer were sequestrated in 1650, on account of his adherence to Romanism, when the Battel Abbey property was valued at £1200 per annum—a very moderate appreciation.

Francis, the fourth viscount, died in 1708, and was succeeded by his brother Henry, fifth viscount, whose son Anthony, sixth viscount Montagu, in 1719, sold the Abbey to Sir Thomas Webster, Bart., who also purchased the neighbouring abbey of Robertsbridge from the earl of Leicester, Bodiham castle from the representatives of Powel, and other valuable estates in Sussex. Sir Thomas was a public spirited and

[17] The manor of Alciston, adjacent to his estate at Firle.

liberal personage, whose antiquarian predilections seem to have had some share in dictating the purchase of these venerable sites. He died in 1751, and was succeeded by his son, Sir Whistler Webster, Bart., who died without issue in 1779, leaving Battel Abbey to his relict, who survived until 1810.

The title devolved upon his brother, Sir Godfrey, third baronet, who died in 1780. His son Sir Godfrey, fourth baronet, transmitted Battel Abbey to his eldest son, Sir Godfrey Vassall, fifth baronet, who died in 1836. Sir Godfrey married Charlotte, daughter of Robert Adamson, Esq., by whom he had issue the present Sir Godfrey Webster, sixth baronet, and other children. Charlotte, lady Webster, survives her husband, holds Battel Abbey, and is justly proud of a possession which in antient days was regarded as "the token and pledge of the crown and realm of England," and which is still esteemed as one of the greatest and most interesting historical monuments of our beloved country.[18]

"I doe lobe these auncyent 'abbayes;'
We never tread within them but we set
Our foote upon some reverend historie."

[18] For fuller details, original documents, &c., the reader will consult the new edition of the *Monasticon*. Many popular historical and topographical works contain accounts of the Abbey, which in some material points are amusingly incorrect. One authority assures us that Battel Abbey lies a heap of ruins!—a second, that there is not one stone left upon another!!—and a third, that the site is now a pool of water!!! It seems only necessary, in order to complete the ridiculous climax, to affirm that no such place as Battel ever existed, and that William the Conqueror is a nonentity and a *myth!* For those who are still inclined to the belief in both as substantial verities, I cannot do better than recommend the perusal of a little book, called *Gleanings respecting Battel Abbey* (Battel, 1841), to the author of which (Mr. Vidler) I am indebted for considerable topographical information.

THE Appendix to the Anglia-Christiana edition of our *Chronicon* contains some interesting documents relating to Battel Abbey, of which the following is a summary:—

A. The Foundation Charter of William the Conqueror, from Selden's edition of *Eadmer*. This it is unnecessary to translate, the substance of it being given in the body of the *Chronicle*. Selden and Spelman agree that this document confers privileges unheard of before.

B. Abstract of a shorter Chronicle of Battel, Cotton. MS., Nero D. II.

C. List of the Abbots from the Regist. de Bello.

D. Taxatio of benefices of Ixning, Bramford, &c., A.D. 1200.

E. Extracts from the Regist. de Bello.

1. *Confirmation of a Corrody in the Abbey to Alan de Meltone*, chamberlain of the Bp. of Chichester, on payment of 100 marks from the bishop, by Abbot John (de Taneto) dated A.D. 1300.

2. *Terms of this Pension.*—This curious document explains the nature of the above corrody or allowance, which was this: Every day De Meltone was to receive two simenels[1] of the larger weight, a gallon and a half of convent beer, a dish and a half, whether of flesh or fish, like that of the brethren in the hall; his attendant to have two black loaves, a gallon of beer, and his other food like that of the Abbey's own servants. Alan himself was likewise to receive annually a furred robe of the same cloth as that worn by the *Esquires* of the Abbey, and a decent chamber within the walls of the monastery, hay for one horse, with sufficient litter for his chamber, and wood for his fire. Dated 1300.

This accommodation was probably granted to the bishop for the convenience of his chamberlain, when visiting the episcopal estates at Bexhill, and other places in the vicinity of the Abbey.

3. Reference to a charter of King John. See page 199.

4. Reference to a confirmation of the immunity of B. A. from the bishop of Chichester by Pope Honorius. The same from Archbishop Theobald.

5. Pope Gregory's confirmation.

6. Archbishop Theobald's confirmation, referring to the trial at Colchester, p. 115.

[1] See page 27.

7. Letter of Stigand, Bishop of Chichester, acknowledging the freedom of the Abbey. See page 31.

8. Taxatio of the vicarage of Icklesham.

9. A deed of Richard, Bishop of Chichester, conferring the rectory of Alciston, with its chapel of Lullington upon the Abbey; also certain portions of the tithes of Westfield, the brethren paying the vicar 100 shillings annually, besides one pilch or furred garment, and decent clerical coats.[2] Dated 1251.

10. Composition between B. A. and the bishop of Chichester, by which the independence of the former is considerably modified. Dated 1255. An interesting sequel to the controversy so long carried on between the two churches. It provides, among other things, that the abbot should receive benediction in Chichester cathedral, or in any other church agreed upon by both parties, *except the church of Battel Abbey!*

11. Profession of obedience to B. A. by the dean of Battel. 1250.

12. Mode of electing a new abbot.

Of the Registers and other Manuscripts relating to Battel Abbey, the following are the principal now extant:—

1. MS. Cotton Domit. A. ii; the document of which this volume is a translation. Dugdale makes extensive use of it.

2. A Register of the Abbey, preserved among Sir Matthew Hale's MSS., at Lincoln's Inn, B. 87.

3. A Register, lately in the possession of Sir G. Webster, now among the Battel Abbey muniments, *penes* Sir Thomas Phillipps, of Middle Hill.

4. "Registrum Cartarum Monasterii S. Martini de Bello." MS. Harl., No. 3586. An imperfect volume of 63 leaves, consisting principally "of law pleadings, forms of instruments, presentations to livings, manumissions, &c."

5. "Rentale et Consuetudinarium de Bello," in the Augmentation Office. A large and handsome folio, on 292 leaves of vellum. It was made temp. Henry VI, during the abbacy of Thomas Ludlow.

6. "Registrum Cœnobii de Bello," also in the Augmentation Office at Westminster. A very antient MS., consisting of a few leaves only. For a summary of the contents of these MSS. see the *Monasticon*, iii, 236-7-8, *notes*.

To this list from the *Monasticon*, I am enabled to add:—

7. "Breve Chronicon Abbatiæ de Bello ab anno Domini 1065 ad 1264.

[2] "Cum una pellicea et cotis decentibus."

cum continuatione ad 1286." It is a small 4to, on vellum, and belongs to the University of Oxford, to which it was presented by Dr. Rawlinson, the antiquary. It is marked in the Bodleian Catalogue of his books, "Rawlinson B. 150." The "Breve Chronicon" occupies six pages at the beginning. Then follow "the Names of the Kings of England from William I to Edward I," and the "Names of the Counties and Bishops of England," forming the second and third portions of the MS. The fourth part is entitled "Abbreviatio Bruti (i. e. Galfredi de Monm.) cum continuatione ad mortem Simonis Comitis Leycestrensis, A.D. 1265." This abridgment was evidently made by a monk of Battel, and contains some notices of incidents in the march of Henry III against the Barons not elsewhere recorded.[3] See page 200 of this volume. The Cottonian MS. Nero D. ii, embraces the same period, but differs considerably from the Rawlinson MS.

[3] Ex inform. Rev. Edw. Turner, rector of Maresfield.

[Head of a Javelin found near the field of "Battel," and now in the Sussex Archæological Society's Museum. It closely resembles those depicted in the Bayeux Tapestry.]

INDEX.

Abbat, Ælfwin, 19.
Abbeys, mitred, what, 203.
Adrian IV (Nicholas Breakspear), 86; bull of, 87, 112, 126.
Ædric, "who cast the bells," 17.
Æilbricheston, 45.
Æilnod, the shoemaker, 17; the son of Fareman, 18.
Æilward, a monk, 66.
Ælwin, the secretary, 19.
Ældwin, the cook, 17.
Ælfric, the steward, 16.
Ailric, the baker, 18.
Ainard, a monk, 12.
Alard, 213.
Alciston, manor of, 34.
Aldred, archbishop, 26.
Alexander, a clerk, 126.
Alihermont, palace of, 181.
Ambrose, William, 210.
Ambleville, Robert de, 63.
Andreeston, 45.
Anestia, 123.
Anselm, archbishop, 44, 47, 48, 170.
Ansger, archdeacon of Lewes, 86.
Apeldreham (Appledram), 61.
Apostols, altar of the, 66.
Arms of Battel Abbey, 206.
Ashburnham, de, 212.
Aubrey, the legate, 71.
Awen, John, 210.
Aylesford, abbot, Henry de, 202.
Aysham, 143.

Bailol, Withlard de, 58, 116; Gilbert de, 118.
Baldwin, the shoemaker, 19.
Banningeham, 45.
Barbe, Brictric, 19.
Bartholomew, bishop of Exeter, 189.
Basoc, de, 213.
Battel, so called by order of William the Conqueror, 13.
Battel, town of, built, 15, 32; market granted for, 37; styled Burgus, 153.
Battel church (S. Mary) built, 61; its immunities, 62; Humphrey, priest of 182; Walter, priest of, 185.
Battlebridge, in Southwark, 81.
Bathurst, castle at, 14; wood, 144.
Bayeux Tapestry, 4, 41.
Beawerdregge, 195.
Bec, monastery of, 170.
Bece, 13.
Beche, Reginald de, 15; Hugh de, 153; fam. 212.
Beche, 22.
Becchenridere, Ingelram, 116.
Bede, Thomas, 210.
Bekewell, 195.
Bellafago (Beaufoy) de, Richard, 133, 140; Alan de, 133, 134, 136, 138, 141.
Bello, Robert de, 204.
Belet, John, 66.
Benet, the sewer, 17.
Benedict, abbot of Peterborough, 179.
Benetlege (Bentley), 45.
Benyng, John, 210.
Bercholt (Bergholt), 45.
Berintona (Berington), 39.
Bernard, bishop of S. David's, 68.
Bernhorn (Barnhorn), 58, 116, 119, 121.
Blacheni, the cowherd, 16.
Blancard, Robert, 10; elected abbot, 12; drowned, 12.
Boccham, or Vochehant, 13.
Bocholt (Buckholt), 58, 121.
Bocstepe (Bucksteep), 59.
Bodeham, 15; grant of meadows at, 38.
Bodiham, 38, 145; castle, 214.
Bodiham, Emma de (wife of Osbern), 60.
Bodeherste, 14, 21, 22, 23.
Bodeherstegate (Blacheman de), 19.
Bolonia, Robert, 10.
Borne, Robert, benefactions of, 145; Ralph, 145.
Bos (le Bœuf), 14.
Bos (le Bœuf) Robert, 144; family, 212.
Bothherstegate, 13, 23.

Braceur, Roger, 19.
Bramber, 39.
Branford (Bramford), 45, 136, 140.
Brantham, 45, 133, 136, 139.
Braose, William de, 39; Philip de, 40.
Brecknock, a cell to Battel Abbey, founded, 38; revolts, 204.
Bregeselle, 59; family, 59.
Brembel, 18.
Bretherste, 24.
Brictric, the gardener, 19,
Bridgnorth castle, 83.
Brihtwin, the bedel, 15.
Bristwoldingtun (Brightwaltham), 35, 123.
Bromham, 44, 123; de, 213.
Brother, a priest, 53.
Browne, Sir Anthony, 213, 214; Francis, 214.
Brundele (Brundall), 45.
Brunreve, 20.
Bulintune, 14, 52.
Bulworeheth (Bulverhythe), 22.
Burrell, a horse-stealer, 29.
Burgesses of Battel, 20.
Burnulph, the carpenter, 17.
Burstale, 45.

Caen, ships sent to, for stone for the Abbey, 10; William the Conqueror buried at, 41; founds two monasteries at, 42; Ralph of, 57.
Caermarthen, 61, 68.
Caldbeck in Battel, 7.
Campyon, or Champyon, abbot, 207.
Cannarius, Sevugel, 19.
Candle, cursing by, 144.
Canterbury, church of, destroyed by fire, 163.
Carlo, the precentor, 63.
Castles in the reign of Stephen, note on, 83.
Catecumbe, 23.
Catsfield, 14, 22.
Ceadwalla, king, 177.
Celvetege, 23.
Chaaines, Richard de, 121.
Chapenore, 23.
Charter of William I renewed, 181.
Chebel, 18.
Cheneberia, 35.
Cheneward, 19.
Chichester, bishop of, the abbot's exemption from, 28.
Chilham, Fulbert de, 53.
Chilton, Robert de, his peculations at Wye, 53; fined, 54.
Cild, Æilric, 17.
Ciprian, Bartholomew, 210.
Cirisi, Robert de, 17.
Clare, William de, 144.
Clarenbald, abbot of Feversham, 150.
Clarendon, palace of, 118-120.
Claverham, 24.
Clement, Edward, 210.
Cloister, the, of B. A. rebuilt, 149.
Cocard, 19.
Coche, William, 10.
Cochec, Sevugel, 16.
Colchester, 94, 135.
Coluntuna (Collumpton), 35.
Combwell in Goudhurst, 200.
Compenage, what, 20.
Conqueror, William the, lands at Pevensey, 2; makes a vow to build an abbey, 4, 26; character of, 8-9; meets Harold's army at Battel, 25; anecdotes of, 32-33; disabled at Rouen, 40; bequeaths his royal pallium to B. A., with divers relics, 41; reflections on his death, 42.
Cono, a monk, 36.
Cornuvilla, Robert de, 78.
Cornwall, Robert de, 105, 110.
Cornwall, Ivo de, 191.
Corveiser, Ælfric, 19.
Council, at Westminster, 187.
Coutances, Roger, bishop of, 44.
Coutances, Walter de, 181.
Coventry, Abbot Ralph de, 200.
Craspeis, 34.
Craumareis (Crowmarsh), 35.
Crane, Abbot John, 205.
Crevequeor, Robert de, 125.
Criminals, the abbot's privilege of pardoning, 28; exercised, 204.
Criol, Peter de, 119, 153.
Cromwell, Lord, Gage's letter to, 209.
Crowhurst, 13, 14.
Crowhurst, de, 213.
Crull, Siward, 19, 20.
Curlebasse, Ælfric, 19.
Curse pronounced by Abbot Walter, 144.
Curteis, 213.
Customs, feudal, of townsmen of Battel, [illegible] *et seq.*; of the gilds, 24; of the m[illegible] of Wye, 34.
Cuthbert, Thomas, 210.

Dallington, 59.
Dartmouth, Abbot Richard, 206; Richa[illegible] a monk, 210.
Dean, the incumbent of Battel so styled, 1[illegible]
Dengemarsh, Ælfric de, 17.
Dengemarsh, 34, 72, 73.
Dering, 18.
Dissolution, the, of B. A., 208.
Dot, Ælfric, 16.
Dove, a silver one for the high altar, 152
Drayton's Polyolbion quoted, 7.

Dreux, de, 213.
Ducg, Ralph, 16.
Dudilande, 59.
Dunintune, 22.
Duniford, 22.
Dunstan, Vincent, 210.
Durand, 19.

Echyngham, de, 212.
Edmund's, St., 94, 136.
Edward I visits B. A., 202.
Edward, the scourer, 16.
Edwin, 17.
Eilesham (Aylsham), 45.
Elephantiasis, 148.
Ely, William of, 66.
Emma, 17, 18.
Epiton, Battel never so called, 32.
Erringham, 39.
Essarts, 123.
Esse, 37.
Essex, Henry of, 95, 97; reproves the bishop of Chichester, 103, 104, 105.
Eu, earl of, 13, 38, 60, 116, 118, 183, 212.
Eugenius III, pope, 77.
Eustace, count of Boulogne, 6.
Exelinges (Exning), 45.
Exeter, chapel of St. Olave, at, 35, 36; a cell founded at, 36; church of St. Nicholas burnt and rebuilt, 147.
Extortions of Alan de Neville, 123.

Faber, William, origin of his name, 5; appointed to found the Abbey, 9.
Fechamp, 39.
Feretory filled with relics bequeathed to B. A. by William the Conqueror, 41; a new one made, 63.
Feversham abbey, 78.
Fillel, Robert, 53; family, 212.
Finch, 213.
Fitz-Gerald, Warine, 95, 97.
Fitz-Hugh, Osbern, his grant of Bodeham, 38, 145.
Fitz-Lambert, Walter, 13.
Fitz-Osbert, or Osborne, the duke's sewer, anecdotes of, 2, 4.
Fitz-Sigar, Siward, 117.
Fitz-Wido, 14.
Flagi, an abbey in Normandy, 49; Odo, abbot of, 51.
Flimwell, slaughter at, 200.
Fly, abbey of, 49.
Foliot, Gilbert, bishop of London, 162, 164.
Fraelvilla. Anselm de, 59; Roger de, 59; family, 212.
Francefant, 17.
Fundintune (Funtington), 60.

Gage, Sir John, 34, 206, 208, 210; Viscount, 206.
Gausbert, abbot, elected, 12, 29; consecrated, 30; death and burial of, 46.
Gausfrid, abbot of S. Alban's, 72.
Gausfrid, custos of B. A., his appointment, 52; punishes the steward of Wye, 54; claims right of "wreck," 55; opposes the designs of Marmoutier, 56; his death, 56.
Gausfrid, abbot of Holme, 97.
"Geraldine, the Fair," 214.
Genester, Reinbald, 19; Humfrey, 20.
Gest, Benwold, 17.
Gilbert, the clerk, 17.
Gilbert, the stranger, 17.
Gilbert, the weaver, 16.
Gilds, three in Battel, 24.
Gilmer, one, 213.
Gisard, Godwin, 20.
Glesham, 58.
Gloucester, 83; Richard, earl of, 144.
Godfrey, 17.
Godieve, 16.
Godwin, son of Colsuein, 16; Godwin, the cook, 16.
Golding, 17.
Goldstan, 17.
Goldwin, 17.
Goringe family, the, bondmen in 1617, 117.
Gosfrid, the cook, 17.
Gotcild, Edw. 16.
Gotselin, 17.
Gournay, the sires de, 49.
"Greaves," or leg-harness, 145.
Gregorie, Clement, 210.
Grei, William, 16.
Gris, Seward, 16.
Gundulph, bishop of Rochester, 44, 57.
Gunnild, 17.
Gunter, a monk of B. A., sent to Exeter, 36.
Gunter, abbot of Thorney, 57.

Hacket, Ælfwin, 19.
Hamon, Fitz. 212.
Hameline, a monk, 12.
Hamond, abbot John, 207; his surrender of B. A., 208, 210.
Hamo, son of Vital, 53.
Harold, king, slain, 6.
Harietsham, co. Kent, 184.
Hastings, wooden castle built at, 3; battle of, 6; collegiate chapel of, 104; town of, burnt, 205; de, 212.
Hastyng, John, 210.
Havena, Robert de, 16.
Hay, John de la, 200; family of, 201, 212.
Hecilande, 14.
Heca, Æilnoth, 19.
Henry, abbot, elected, 47; death of, 53.

Henry I, accession of, 51; founds Reading Abbey, 60; his death, 70; his abhorrence of the wreck laws, 73.
Henry, archdeacon of Chichester, 63, 86.
Henry II, crowned, 79; calls a council at London, 79; goes over to Normandy, 85; returns to England, 93; anecdote of, 101; reproves the bishop of Chichester, 107; anecdote of, 124; quarrel with á Becket, 157; his penance, 159.
Henry III, extorts money from B. A., 200.
Henfelde, John, 210.
Herste, 10, 23; de, 213.
Hert, Wulfwin, 17.
Herod, 17.
Heregrave, 40.
Hereford, Roger, earl of, 83.
Herst (Monceux), accident at, 201.
Hetheland or Hecheland, 3, 21, 22, 23.
Hildeward, prior of B. A., 67.
Hilary, bishop of Chichester, 74; opposes the privileges of B. A., 75; excommunicates abbot Walter, 79; goes over to Normandy, 85; speech of, 99; denies the king's right of interference, 100; is reconciled to abbot Walter, 114.
Hineland, 37.
Holeford, 195.
Holintune (Hollington), 14.
Hoo, Lord (Thomas), founds a chantry at B. A., 206, 213.
Hou, 14; in Essex, 35, 94.
Hugh, the secretary, 19.
Hugezum, cardinal, 187.
Hugh, abbot, 199.
Hugoline, precentor, 200.
Humphrey, the priest, 19.
Humez, Richard de, 84, 95.
Hunger, Lefwin, 18.
Horsmede, 34.
"Hurst," a common termination to Sussex names, 10.

Icklesham, Robert de, 121, 122; Matilda de, 121; fam. 212.
Inguwerthe (Ingworth), 45.
Ingelram, 58, 116.
Inns of the abbot, 30, 81.
Instrumental music at B. A., 48.
Ipres, William de, 73.
Itintune, 15.
Ittington lane, 15.
Ivo de Cornwall, 191.

Jeremarus, (S. Germer), 49.
Jerome's Epistles, book of, presented by B.A. to Chichester, 62.
John, a monk, 12; bishop of Bath, 44.
John, dean of Chichester, 86; speech of 88; afterwards bishop, 160, 176, 187.
John, chaplain of Harietsham, 184.
John, bishop of Chartres, 189.
John, king, his visits and gifts to B. A., *199*.
Jordan, dean of Chichester, 176.
Jerome, John, 210.
Jose, John, prior of Brecknock, 204.
Josceline, bishop of Salisbury, 126, 127.

Ketlyng or Retlyng, abbot, 203; fortifies B. A., 203.
Knepp castle, 200.
Knight, Edwin, 18.

La ville d'Eu, in Normandy, 13.
Ladd, Richard, 210.
Lambert, the shoemaker, 16.
Lambert, 18.
Lambarde's Peramb. of Kent, 73.
Lanfranc, archbishop, 57.
Langenhersse, 68.
Lavatorium at B. A., 149.
Layton, Richard, 208, 210.
Le Despencer, 212.
Leeds Priory, co. Kent, 125.
Leffelm, a monk, 12; a townsman of Battel, 18.
Lefwin the baker, 18.
Legard, 16.
Leicester, Robert Earl of, 95, 123.
Lenglentune, 39.
Leprosy, 148.
Leuga, of Battel, 13; dimensions of, 13, 28; remeasured, 64.
Levett, Thomas, 210.
Lewes, priory, 71; battle of, 202.
Library of Battel Abbey, 211.
Limnesfeld (Limpsfield), 35.
Liuns in Normandy, 71.
Lonley, 72.
Lounge, Lefflet, 18.
Lower, Walter and William, 206.
Loxbeche, 22, 23.
Lucy, Walter de, abbot, elected, 72; his boldness towards king Stephen, 74; his dispute with Hilary, bishop of Chichester, 76; summoned to Chichester, 86; his speech in defence, 90, 99, 104; reconciled to Hilary, 114; proceeds to recover lost benefices, 124 *et seq.*; appoints a yearly feast, 143; character of, 148; rebuilds the cloister, 149; last illness, 149; death, 150.
Lucy, Richard de, 72, 79, 84, 85, 93, 94, 95, (speech of), 96, 97, 108, 119, 123, 150, 153, 165, 181, 187.
Lucy, Godfrey de, 154, 187, 196.
Ludlow, Abbot Thomas de, 205.
Lullington, diminutive church at, 35.
Lydbury, Abbot John, 205.

Magniac, H. Esq.; his "Pix," 152.
Mail, coat of, 4.
Malling, near Lewes, 177.
"Malfosse" deplorable accident at, 6.
Malgar, the smith, 16.
Manners, 212.
Mareschall, 212.
Marmoutier, a monastery, 4, 26, 27, 31.
Marsh, St. Martin's, 58.
Married priests, 135.
Martin, St., patron of Battel Abbey, 5; gild of, 24.
Maurice, 17.
Maurilius, archbishop of Rouen, 170.
Mendlesham, 45, 135, 136, 138.
Merlin's prophecy of the battle of Hastings, 5.
Mersh or Meresham, abbot, 205.
Middlehala (Mildenhall), 45, 125, 127, 143.
Mienes, manor of, 68.
Mills of the Abbey, 22.
Miraculous judgment against the monks of Flagi, 50.
Miracles at Battel, 146.
Moin, Roger, 14.
Monceux, de, 212.
Montague, viscount, 214.
Montfort, Robert de, 95.
Morris, W. S., History of Wye, 33.
Mortimer, Hugh de, his rebellion, 83.
Moun, 212.
Mountjoy in Battel, 7.

Nedrefeld (Netherfield), 14, 200.
Neville, family of, *note*, 122; Alan de, 122, 124.
Newmarch, Bernard de, his donations, 38; Agnes, wife of, 39.
Newton, John, abbot, 207; John, a monk, 210.
Nicholas, son of Withgar, 136.
Nonna Æstrild, 17.
Norden, John, quoted, 117.
Normanville, Gerald de, 58, 212.
Northampton, 131.
Northburne, abbot John de, 203.
Nortuna (Norton), 45.
Nuc, Lefwi, 17.

Odo, bishop of Bayeux, 34.
Odo, abbot, nominated, 166; objects to the office, and appeals to the pope, 166; but ultimately assents, 171; returns to Canterbury, 173; received at B.A., 175; excellent life of, 178; suit of with Godfrey de Lucy, 187; anecdote of, 196.
Offynton, abbot Hamo de, 204; defends Winchelsea, 205.
Olave, S., king and martyr, 35.
Omens interpreted for good by W. Fitz Osbert, 3, 4.
Ongar in Essex, 93.
Orbec, William de, 129, 130, 131.
Orderic the swineherd, 16.
Ordeal by water, 59.
Orgar, 18.
Osbern, son of Isilia, 60.
Osbert, 13.
Osmund, bishop of Salisbury, 44.

Palerne, de, 212.
Patrick, bishop of Salisbury, 97.
Pax, the, note on, 82, 111.
Peche, Pagan, 19.
Peché, Hamo de, 128; Gaufrid de, 131.
Pechet, Osbert, 19.
Peculations of builders of the Abbey, 27.
Penance, exemption from, 64.
Penhurst, 14.
Pentewi, in Wales, 61.
Petlee, 22, 23.
Peter, the baker, 17.
Pepper-cake and wine for the monks, 143.
Pevensey, abbot John de, 203.
Phillipps, Sir Thomas, owner of the B. A. charters, 212.
Philesham, 14.
Picot family, 212.
Pilgrims, house of, 15.
Pinel, William, 16.
Pionius, Dering, 16.
Piperinge, 22.
Pix, a, presented to B. A. by abbot Walter, 152.
Plesseiz, 24.
Poitou, Richard of, 140.
Privileges of the Abbey, 27, 37.
Profanity of Norman nobles, 101.
Prunhelle (Promhill), 59.
Pucelle, Gerald, 188; pleads for abbot Odo, 193.
Puchehole, 15, 22.

Quarrere, 23, 24.
Quincy, de, 213.

Ralph, abbot, appointed, 57; his wise government, 58; enlarges the Abbey, 64; character of, 65; death and burial, 66.
Ralph, bishop of Chichester, endeavours to subjugate the Abbey, 48; confirms its privileges, 62, 63.
Ralph, son of Theodore, 40.
Ralph the bald, 63.
Reading, 35; abbey of, 60.
Reginald, earl of Cornwall, 84.
Reginald, abbot, 200.

Reliquary, a new one made, 63.
Richard, abbot, 199.
Richard, archbishop, 155; consecrated, 159; consecrates abbot Odo, 177, 183.
Richard of Poitou, 182.
Richard, bishop of London, 97, 126, 127.
Richelherste, 22.
Robert, bishop of Exeter, 97.
Robert, bishop of Lincoln, 97.
Robert, earl of Leicester, 97.
Robert, the miller, 16; a monk, 36.
Robert the Philosopher, 127, 129, 138.
Robertsbridge Abbey, 183, 201, 202, 214.
Roger, a monk, 38.
Roger, bishop of Salisbury, 66.
Roger, treasurer of Chichester, 86.
Roger, archbishop of York, 97, 108.
Roger, abbot of S. Augustine, 180.
"Roll of Battel Abbey," 211.
Ruff, Mathelgar, 17.
Ruff, Walter, 20.
Russell, 18.
Rufus, William, crowned, 43; endows B.A. with the manor of Bromham, 44; dedicates the Abbey, 44; sanctions an extortionate act concerning it, 49; death of, 51.
Rye, gift of salt-pits at, 60.

Salehurst, Richard, a monk, 210.
Salmon, fresh, 145.
Salt manufactures in Sussex, 39, 60.
Sanford (Samford), 45.
Sansei, near Criuil, in Normandy, 60.
Santlache (or Sanguelac) in Battel, 7, 23.
Saumur, in Normandy, 85.
Scipdene, 45.
Scot, Wulfwin, 19.
Scotlege, 45.
Scotney, Ingelram de, 144; family of, 144, 213; castle, 144.
Seals, only fit for great men, 119.
Seam of malt, 15.
Seasons unfruitful in 1124, 1125, 67.
Sedlescombe, 15.
Seffrid, bp. of Chichester, 67; summons Abbot Warner to his synod, 68, 72.
Selaf, the herdsman, 16.
Setlescumbe, 15.
Sevugel, 18.
Sewin, 17.
Siflet, Robert, son of, 16.
Sigillo, Nicholas de, 95.
Silvester, abbot of S. Augustine's, 97.
Simenel, fine bread, granted to the monks by the Conqueror, 27; Lambert, 27.
Sirefordia, 35.
Slote, 18.
Smewin's Wist, 144.
Sorham, Shoreham, 39.
Sothope, Battel originally so called (?), 32.
Southampton. 93.
St. Alban's, 78.
St. Leger, William, 59; family of, 59, 212; Clarenbald, 60.
St. Martin, Alfred de, 183.
Staines, 127.
Standard of Harold, 11.
Stene, la, 22.
Stevechaia (Stiffkey), 45.
Stephen, king, his accession, 71; death, 78.
Stigand, archbishop, 26.
Stigand, bishop of Chichester, consecrates Abbot Gausbert at Battel, 30, 77, 107.
Stigerop, Siward, 17.
Strellewelle, 24.
Suilingæ, 32.
Sumeri, de, 212.
Sword, the Conqueror's, 206, 211.

Taneto, Abbot John de, 202.
"Te Deum" sung at Odo's election, 171.
Telham, 21.
Temple of Jerusalem, a brother of, 79.
Theobald, a monk, surnamed Vetulus, 9.
Theobald, archbishop, 77, 79, 86, 97, 126.
Theophilus the Blasphemer, story of, 169.
Third penny of the shire, 34.
Thomas, dean of Hastings, 86.
Thomas à Becket, 95, 96, 97, 102, 106; speech of, in defence of B. A., 108; made archbishop, 156; oppressed and exiled, 157; slain, 158.
Tipa, Edild, 18.
Torneia (Thorney), 36.
Tournay, Roger de, slain, 201.
Tovy, or Toby, abbot, 207.
Townsmen of Battel, list of, 15.
Trewa, Elfwin, 12.
Trilawe, 95, 128, 129, 130.
Turpin, Ælfwin, 19.

Uccheham, Uckham, 21, 23, 24.
Uppetona, 36.

Vestment, story of one sacrilegiously obtained from the treasures of B. A., 48—51.
Vetus Villa, 38.
Vidler, Mr., his "Gleanings," 215.
Vision of a matron at Battel, 11.
Vivian, the king's chaplain, sent to B. A., 52.

Waevre, 37.
Waleran of Bayeux, 192.
Walkelin, bishop of Winchester, 44.
Waller, Abbot William, 206.
Walter, abbot. *See* Lucy, Walter de.
Walter, a clerk of Berkshire, 185.

Walter, a monk, 38.
Wardeux, 213.
Warenne, Reginald de, 97.
Warmincgeherste (Warminghurst), 39.
Warner, abbot, 51; appointed, 67; his good economy, 67; decorates the Abbey, 69; quarrel with bishop Seffrid and breach of hospitality, 69; incurs the king's disfavour and retires to Lewes priory, 71.
Wartling, 59.
Wasingate, 13.
Wastel, what, 143.
Water, scarcity of, at Battel Abbey, 10.
Watlington, 15.
Watlyngton, Abbot John de, 203.
Webster Family, owners of B. A., 214, 215.
Wening, his donation, 59.
Westbece (Westbeech), 15.
Westfelde (Westfield), 59.
Westfelde, Abbot William, 207; Clement, 210.
Wicham, 15.
Wigmore, 83.
William I, *see* Conqueror, William the, *passim*.
William II, *see* Rufus.
William, prince, brother of Hen. II, 95.
William, archbishop, 67, 71.
William, bishop of Durham, 44.
William, abbot of Marmoutier, strives to subjugate B.A., 55.
William, the shoemaker, 16.
Wilminte, 13.
Wiltinges, 14.
Withgar, a priest, 135.
Withiburne, 34.
Winchelsea, Henry III visits, 201; invaded by the French, 205; Cooper's History of, 15.
Winnoc, Wulbald, 18.
Wolf, Juliot, 19.
Wreck, right of, 34; one in Dengemarsh, 54; another, 73.
Wrench's land, 24.
Woodstock, convention at, 160.
Wulfric, 18.
Wulfrun's hide, 40.
Wulfwin, the carpenter, 20.
Wulmer, 16.
Wulric, the goldsmith, 16.
Wye, manor of, 32, 33, 143, 150; church of, 154, 187; college of, 32.

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